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Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER & MELVIN J. LASKY

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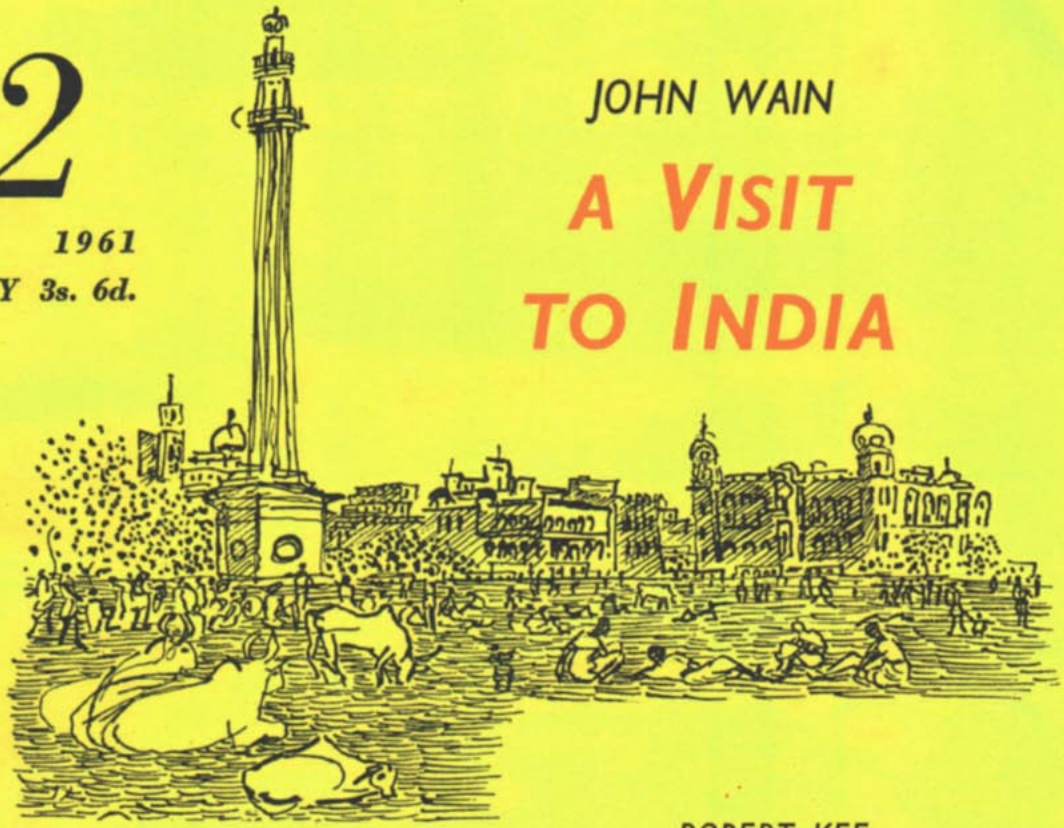

JOHN WAIN

A VISIT TO INDIA

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Homosexuality

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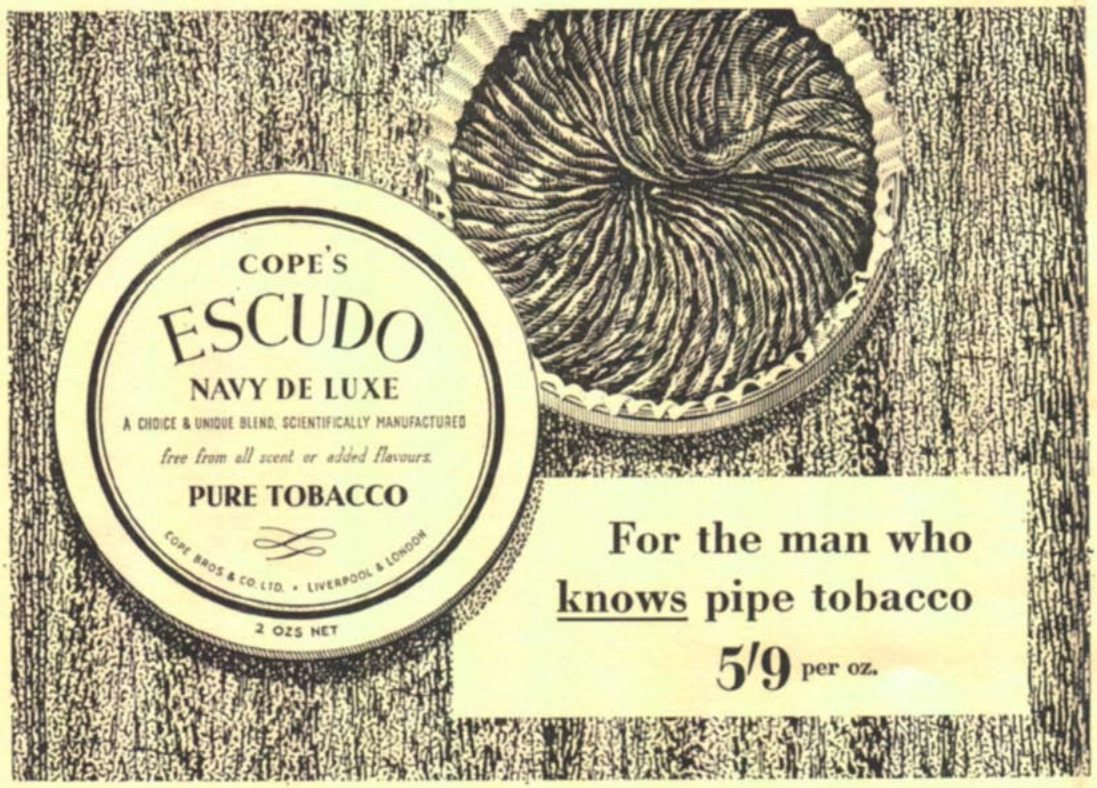

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John Wain

A Visit to India

THE MOST fortunate inhabitants of India are the birds. High above the cities, the great kites wheel slowly in the still air, looking down with that lazy vigilance that is the mark of the bird of prey; and every few minutes, when his telescopic eyesight reveals a scrap of nourishment, one or other of them drops like a stone.

I never saw a sick bird in India, though I saw sick cows, dogs, monkeys, children, men and women. The birds are all sleek and successful-looking: large, exotic ones like gaudy thrushes hop about among the wheels of stationary wagons on the railway sidings; huge storks stand meditatively looking down into the rivers and irrigation canals; green parrots squawk and tumble in the trees; vultures, grey and evil, stare with their incredibly cruel eyes at the sweating, toiling world a few feet below where they perch.

The birds are lucky. When the dust and the clangour become too much, they can rise into the sky. In a verdant, cloud-wrapped country like England, the sky is primarily an æsthetic object; it makes a frame for the green-and-grey picture. In India, as in any tropical country, the sky is the direct antithesis of the land. It is still, unconcerned, uncluttered, where the land is heaped and feverish.

It is easy to hate the Indian people, to hate them for their poverty, their disease and helplessness. A Westerner, accustomed to the idea that the human individual is of supreme value, feels his humanity affronted by the sheer numbers of these hopeless, anonymous, humble figures. Their humility is so great that it amounts to arrogance. They are so many, they ask so little, they rise out of the earth and sink into it again—who are we, with our individual names and faces, our bodies cared for by doctors and dentists, our minds watched over by psychiatrists? Of course one knows that the Indian people have individual names and faces too, and presumably there are registers on which all their names are recorded. . . . I don't think I should like to see those registers. It's bad enough seeing the swarm of skimpy, ragged figures, without seeing the long lists of their names, those names which, for millions of them, are their only possession on earth. How can you enter a man's address in a register when he is sleeping on the pavement, as thousands are in Bombay? Or his trade, when all he has is his willingness to work until he drops, with a broom, with a spade, with his bare hands.*

THAT WILL DO, for the emotion. One must be like the birds, floating in the still sky. And of course, once one has climbed into the realm of abstractions, the mental equivalent of the sky, one finds the statistics. India has

* Nevertheless they are doing it, of course. A new census will be taken in 1961 and will concern itself not only with classification by age, sex, religion (not caste), and marital status, but also with the kind of work people do and what training they have. Non-workers, previously lumped together as "economically dependent," will be classified as "students, housewives, dependents, retired persons, convicts, beggars, unemployed, and those who are seeking an opening for the first time."

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industries, Five Year plans, modern installations of all kinds. Even in the lost villages where people live in windowless mud huts, schools have been built and the children must attend them until they are eight years old. Pathetic? Not really; by the time I was eight I had learnt to read and write and do simple arithmetic; my remaining twelve years of full-time instruction were largely devoted to extending this basic equipment. Eight is a lot better than nothing, if the children really go to school. But do they? In the villages it may be possible, but in the swarming alleyways of the cities, where the beggar-children come out like flies as I walk past—do they go to school? What about the little girl with a twisted leg, who bonks rapidly along with her useless limb wrapped round a wooden pole? She "works" the Imperial Hotel, New Delhi, and if I came away from Delhi without buying all sorts of things I had planned to buy, the credit must go to her, for I soon learned to listen for, and dread, the rapid *bonk-bonk-bonk* as she came towards me under the eucalyptus trees. "Sahib!—sahib!"—*bonk-bonk*—"Sahib!"—*bonk-bonk*. Just the one word, the outstretched hand, the pleading eyes, and the light, rapid sound of the pole striking the pavement. That is why I say it is easy to hate the Indians; this little girl, who made it torture to me to go in or come out, and finally had me imprisoned in the hotel, was hateful *because* pitiable, hateful *because* helpless, *because* I have been taught, and it is too late for me to reject the teaching, that we are all members one of another.

Once, when I managed to fight past the little girl and get as far as the shopping district, a beggar fell into step with me, and, grinning into my face as if about to tell me a good joke, suddenly produced from under his rags two arms with the hands lopped off at the wrists. I tried to take no notice, but he loped beside me and, still grinning, dug me in the ribs with his stumps. He, too, was hateful because he made me hate myself. I cut off his hands, I twisted the child's leg, I am the man, take me away and begin my punishment.

WHAT IS INDIA? I cannot deal in generalisations; I am a writer, not a bureaucrat. "India is competing with China for the leadership of Asiatic mankind." Very fine. But *who* is competing? The paternal industrialist in his villa, the beggar with no hands, the politician? A clever and sympathetic Indian journalist took me to Agra to see the Taj Mahal. A hundred and twenty miles by car, through the parched, dust-clouded countryside. At every village, the driver slowed down to ten miles an hour and kept his thumb on the horn. "If a car ran over a man in one of these places," my friend said, "the people would burn the car and kill the occupants." In Agra, the Taj Mahal awaited us: perfect, timeless, the greatest architectural poem ever achieved. Other buildings are more moving, more filled with a sense of man's tragic situation and his reverence for the powers that sway him; none has captured this utter perfection. The marble, hundreds of tons of it, seems weightless, floating, entirely free from the laws of gravity and density. St. Paul's Cathedral, built at about the same time, seems clumsy and earthbound when I try to recall it here; it seems to speak the language of rational piety and business acumen, where the Taj Mahal speaks only of its own serenity.

We go to lunch. The journalist speaks, as everyone does, of India's problems. "If we can be left alone for ten years, just ten years, we shall emerge." He means, as I know without having to ask him, left alone by the Chinese. There they are, on the other side of the Himalayas, millions upon millions of human ants, all dressed in the one uniform, united by a single fighting creed: toiling and marching, toiling and marching. They have raised their living standards; is Communism the answer? Desperate people in every country have thought so. But why, I wonder, should the drive towards material progress be tied so firmly to a restrictive system of ideas, to revolutionary militarism, to orthodoxy, censorship, and lying propaganda? Is it really impossible to take a backward people, educate them, industrialise them, and still leave them their souls?

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AGAIN I THINK of the birds. From Delhi to Bombay, I travel by train—twenty-six hours, nine hundred miles of dusty earth, on which bent figures toil, hour after hour. I had expected the landscape to be brown, but it is green, a dusty, yellowy green like the English countryside in a September heat-wave. This is the time of the second winter crop, the effect of the autumn monsoons has not yet worn off.

The train has two air-conditioned coaches. I am in one of them; if I were not, I would get off at the first stop. Even in my compartment, which is spacious and in which I travel alone, the dust is always in my eyes, my throat, my nose. I go to the dining-car—but only once. Here as elsewhere, the airlines have forced the railways into a state of permanent second-rateness. The food is just about edible, but the tablecloth is grubby, the waiters wear very dirty white suits, and there is a general air of slumminess. I notice that I am the only non-Indian present; the others look at me curiously. My waiter—in obedience to Wain's Law, the dirtiest one comes straight to my table—seems to have taken a vow to infect me with any diseases that may be going about. In handing out cutlery, he invariably picks up each piece so as to get his fingers on the part I am going to put in my mouth; the spoons by the bowl, the fork by the tines, even the knives by the blades. When his back is turned, I pick up my knife and wipe it experimentally on a slice of bread. It leaves a black, greasy stain. I choke down the meal, hurry back to the compartment, and live for the rest of the journey on peeled apples and black tea. Why didn't I fly? What made me turn down my chance to be, for those few hours, a bird in that clear, untroubled sky?

But even the birds eat garbage.

OVER LUNCH one day, an attractive Indian girl, much travelled in Europe, brings up circuitously the question of the sexual *mores* of the West. She has seen, and been rather shocked by, the public embracing in London parks, the American habit of treating a parked car as a bedroom, and the rest of it. Such behaviour would be inconceivable in India. Embarrassed for my fellow-Westerners, I mumble something about a Puritan society that is in the process of throwing off its Puritanism: the sexual emotions, formerly checked by Christian asceticism or channelled into romantic love, now spill over aimlessly and run in the gutter. There is no inherited code that tells people what to do. This explanation does not satisfy her. "Nobody tells *us* what to do. It's just that certain kinds of behaviour have no place in our life."

I can't answer this; if I attempted a stumbling argument, it would take hours, and she has to get back to her office. But what I want to tell her is that Indian thought, Indian art, philosophy, mysticism, mythology, so far as I am acquainted with them, have succeeded in drawing all the elements of life into a unity. Western Christianity implants in people the idea of "rising above" the emotions which conflict with its teaching, or of "wrestling" and "overcoming" them; in India, as in the East generally, the ideal is assimilation and wholeness. Thus the sexual emotions have a place in Indian religion, and religion digests art, and art digests life: joy, suffering, and patience, the "lower" nature and the "higher." There seem to be no dividing-lines; everything flows; Hinduism, with its enormous number of gods and its absence of dogma, is a religion that never seeks for proselytes, yet has millions of adherents. Being a Hindu is not a question of "bearing witness" or "daring to be a Daniel"; it is as natural as breathing.

These thoughts are still in my mind when, that same evening, I go to see a programme of classical Indian dancing. (I am hazy about the details, but the *cognoscenti* will know what kind of dancing it was if I say that the dancer was Kamala Laxman.) The dances are, of course, an expression of Hinduism; the dancer mimes long narratives about Lord Krishna, or expresses emotions central to the religion. I can see this, and I can also see that the dancing is frankly sexual in character; the whole repertoire of gestures, the coquettish smile which hardly leaves the

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ballerina's face except when she is acting out narrative, the general air of female invitation and submissiveness, all speak in the clearest possible way of the sexual principle animating the entire performance. The contrast with Western classical ballet could not go further; that excludes and refines, this includes and accepts.

To say this is not to praise Indian art, theatre, dancing, at the expense of Western. In each case there is gain and loss. Western art, by excluding, becomes sharper and more concentrated. To us "art" is an activity with its own laws and purposes; inextricably bound up with life, yet conscious of itself as a separate instrument for living. By contrast, a performance like this of Kamala's seems oddly casual, as if it were meant to be something that could happen anywhere, at any time.

It takes place in a kind of big circus tent. The musicians (flute, drum, voice, and viol) squat on the stage. There is no curtain, and no attempt to make the stage a lighted picture in contrast with the darkened auditorium. A row of naked, undisguised footlights play on the dancer, and in front of the stage, at ground-level, sits a man with a big old-fashioned spotlight, complete with limes. It is rather like watching a film being shot; one sees all the works. The auditorium is not darkened, and people move about fairly continuously; their children play up and down the aisles, whether the performance is going on or not. Everything has this air of casualness and relaxation; I begin to see how it is that Oriental entertainments can go on for days on end. And also *why* they do. This is an art of relaxation, of inclusiveness; by comparison, a play by Shakespeare or symphony by Beethoven is an oxygen-chamber into which we venture for a limited time, to return invigorated and with our responses to living more sharply keyed up, but which would kill us if we stayed there too long.

Watching the ballerina's supremely elegant movements, half-listening to the music (which strikes me as not at all unpleasant and, to a Western ear, far more euphonious than, say, Chinese), I realise that this experience is not so much like theatre-going as I understand it as like watching a gymkhana, or perhaps a circus. The musicians sing and play into microphones which blast out the sound, crudely amplified, from somewhere over to one side of the marquee; this gives the curious impression that the men on stage are dummy musicians and that there is a concert going on independently somewhere else. The row of footlights, the naked slats in the roof above the dancer's head, the ropes and cables, the drab backcloth (this has classical sanction, for these dances are meant to be performed without décor), the spotlight operator sitting immediately in front of me, the children running about, all combine to give one a feeling of simultaneity and diversity. Life doesn't stop, people don't hold their breath or go into a trance, because someone happens to be dancing.

My companion this evening is a kindly, soft-spoken Indian lady, the wife of an economics professor. On the way to the theatre by taxi, she classifies the various parts of Bombay: "This is middle class," "This is lower-middle class," "This is a very good area," etc. Every time we pass through the slums she says, "This is a labour area." She seems as class-conscious as an English matron, and more open about confessing it in so many words.

The insects, however, are not party to any class agreement; the next morning I discover that I am covered from head to foot with flea-bites, which swell up like angry marbles. And this, too, is Hinduism, and inclusiveness, and the broad-based casualness. The fleas came to me by permission of Lord Krishna. And with the compliments of the labour area.

INDIAN LITERARY life interests me, naturally. Wherever I go I meet writers, actual or aspirant. I should like to understand them, to have some inkling of what goes on in their minds, but the difficulties are enormous; I cannot read any of the fourteen Indian languages, and this throws me back on English. Yet English is not by any means the principal literary language of

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India; it is used mainly for politics, commerce, and administration. The writer has a clear-cut choice: either he writes in English and devotes himself mainly to presenting a picture of his own country to the outside world, or he writes in an Indian language and addresses his own people. He turns outwards or inwards. And in either case his situation is far from satisfactory. The English-language Indian writer has a chance in the big market, he can make money by his work and also attain to a prestige which stands him in good stead at home; but he is, I think, always haunted by a sense of loss and estrangement. I was told the story of an English-language poet who sent a book of his poems to E. M. Forster; in reply he got a few lines of praise and encouragement, followed by the blunt question, "Why don't you write in your own language?" Whether or not this story is true, it seems to me significant that it should be going the rounds. The Indian-language writer, on the other hand, is crippled economically by the smallness of his public, and psychologically by the impossibility of becoming known to the world at large. I felt the sadness of this when I spent an evening with a circle of Marathi writers in Bombay. Intelligent, alert people, full of questions about contemporary English literature which showed an exceptional knowledge and understanding of it, they must feel terribly the narrowness of their own linguistic area. "Thirty million people speak Marathi," one of them told me, "but the literate population is so small that the greatest Marathi best-seller wouldn't sell more than five hundred copies."

But if the area is narrow, it is also deep. I know what my own choice would be—to write in Marathi and let the big sales and wide publicity take care of themselves. Especially since Indian English, being a *lingua franca*, lacks the fineness of *nuance* that makes literature possible.

I feel I should elaborate this last point a little. It is not a question of "writing English like a native," because of course many Indians are native English-speakers, or nearly so; if English is not the language in which they lisp their first words, it is still acquired very early. The question is, a native of *where*? Since the rise of the United States as a world power, American English has naturally established itself as a language parallel to, but apart from, British English. The two are different, but in relatively subtle ways which have very little importance except for the literary artist who is concerned with questions of tone. Many English people, for example, think of the difference chiefly as a matter of pronunciation and, possibly, slang; they do not see, because they do not need to see, the numerous small ways in which the quality of American life has nudged American English further and further away from British. The picture is further complicated by the fact that American English has become the accepted language in which to describe certain activities (show-business is the primary example here).

Now an Indian writer may take his general standard from London; he will avoid obvious Americanisms such as "gotten" or "don't have" (as in "I don't have toothache," meaning "I am not suffering from it at this moment"). But it is virtually impossible for him to avoid Americanisms altogether; he will inevitably tend, unless his linguistic ear is incredibly sensitive, to write a language that slips from one to the other. At the moment, for instance, I am reading a translation of a Marathi novel. The original is presumably in a pure, self-confident idiom, but the English version is in double focus; sometimes it uses old-fashioned British English ("I answered in the affirmative," etc.), and at other times switches to American, as when an armed villager is described as "spear-toting." In dialogue this becomes intensified:

> "Please take a little milk, just to make us folks happy. Run along laddie and fetch a tumbler from within."

This insecure grip on idiom is a common disease among translators, who are necessarily chosen for their bi-lingual skill rather than their fineness of ear; as a matter of fact, it is what ruins most translations into English

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from lesser-known European languages such as Russian or Polish. It has been my fate to read many novels in this international, translators' English, and the effect has always been to diminish my pleasure. But an Indian writer, working in English, has no means of avoiding this blurred effect; he reads American and British English about equally, and the result is that his English, however familiarly he uses it, is a *patois*, just as the language of Fleet Street show-biz is a *patois*. It can't be helped? We are moving into an era of "Atlantic English"? To this, the true writer's answer is, "You may be, but I'm not." Language, when used by the genuine artist, is a precision instrument, not this international tinned (canned?) luncheon meat.

"INDIA IS A LAND of contrasts." "The old jostling the new." So runs the patter of every tourist agency! The one thing no average Western visitor ever fails to say, on returning from an Eastern country, is that it offers a continual series of these contrasts between old and new. Actually, I doubt whether the East is any different from the West in this respect. The time has gone by when civilisation advanced with a slow enough tread for each new step to be comprehended before the next was taken. Ever since the mid-18th century, when technology first shifted from low to high gear, different ages have been clashing and grinding against each other in the fluid of human consciousness, like icebergs in an Arctic spring. Because England, for instance, is tidier on the surface—everyone dresses in mid-20th-century costume and more or less observes mid-20th-century customs—it would be a mistake to assume that the historical picture is any less confused. The juxtapositions are less immediately obvious than they are in a country like India; in an English city, the tourist won't be constantly entertained by the sight of modern Diesel lorries held up by bullock-carts in the main streets, or people practising Stone Age crafts while jet planes take off and land in the background. The confusion isn't on the surface—but it's there. The Western psyche is just as bewildered, just as fragmented, as the Eastern could possibly be.

One summer day recently, I happened to be in Edinburgh with a few hours to spare and nowhere to go. So I took a train out to the village of Hawthornden, partly to have a country walk and partly to pay homage to the shade of the poet Drummond. When I got there, I could not find much that suggested the 17th century, but at least the place had a sleepy rural air, and the woods ("the classic woods of Hawthornden," in Scott's phrase) were pleasant to stroll in. By the time I returned to the village, which consisted mainly of a modern Council estate, it was after six o'clock and I was thirsty. I looked round for a pub, and finally saw in the distance a neon sign reading "BAR." This proved to be not a public house in the English sense (that institution never really caught on in Scotland) but a nondescript place with a rubberised floor and tubular steel furniture such as you might find in a small town in the mid-West. I went in, ordered a beer, and, sitting down to drink it, tried to shut out my surroundings and think of William Drummond and the classic woods of Hawthornden. The television set was barking away, and the landlord and three or four customers had grouped themselves on one side of the room to watch it. As I drank, doing my best not to listen, a word here and there began to force itself on my attention, and after a few minutes I began to catch the names. "Gareth . . . Lancelot . . . Mordred . . . Morgan Le Fay." I went over and looked at the screen. My ears had not deceived me. The programme was some kind of serialisation of the Arthurian cycle—the "matter of Britain" of 12th-century classification.

So do not tell me, please, of the "contrasts" in Indian or African life, as if the civilisation I come from made one intelligible whole. To sit in the dreary neon-lit bar, at Hawthornden, drinking modern, chemically-brewed beer, while the electronic medium brings me one more modern re-vamp of that medieval legend, is to be in the presence of quite as much confusion as one mind will stand. It

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is all right, or more or less all right, for me; my education did at least equip me with some basic clues, so that I can name and identify the various pieces that make up the jigsaw, and recognise that it *is* a jigsaw. But what about the other people I saw in the bar? Country labourers, robbed of a countryside to live in or a rural way of life; preferring, quite possibly, this neon lighting and steel furniture to the village inn they used to know. What do stories of Morgan Le Fay mean to them? What can they possibly relate them to? They listen, and quaff their chemical beer-substitute, and something comes over: but what?

So IN INDIA. When I see, from the train window, an occasional modern highway or irrigation scheme, and a moment later a village of baked-earth hovels, peopled by labourers whose entire way of life was ancient when the Old Testament was written, I do not immediately say to myself, "Contrast." If I cannot fathom the minds of people among whom I live, whose language I speak, and who obey the same laws and customs as I do, how can I tell what the Indian peasant is thinking? And why should I assume that the confusion, the clash of modernity with the immemorial past, is any greater in his case than in my own?

In fact it is probably the obvious gulf that is the easier one to negotiate. A people like the North American Indians have shown themselves capable of living in the modern and the prehistoric worlds simultaneously. Joseph Mitchell, in his account of *The Mohawks in High Steel*, has shown how the young men leave the reservation and travel all over America, undertaking specially difficult and dangerous construction work. They travel as a group, under an acknowledged leader, and return periodically to the reservation with booty in the form of money, cars, watches, and so forth. The immemorial pattern of their lives has, in fact, changed much less than a casual observer might think. In the same way, an Indian worker who handles modern equipment, the like of which his father never saw or dreamt of, may be rural and traditional inwardly. Whereas a British farm labourer, even if he works with horses or scatters seed from a basket, has an urban psychology; he must have, because the rural psychology has been extinct for forty years. And yet he is not fully a townsman and a production-line worker. He does not fit smoothly into any category, but lives in a state of continual slight discomfort and bewilderment. This state, of course, the average Indian and African will attain as mechanisation and de-tribalisation gain ground. And then they will be as happy and fortunate as we are.

But by that time, our own mental universe, which might be described as that of the Reformation, inflated by imperial prosperity, punctured by war and hardship, and finally vulgarised by commercialism, will doubtless have been milled down into Heaven knows what New-Iron-Age simplification.

NO, THE REAL "contrasts" in Indian life are, so to speak, lateral: not contrasts between old and new, but between the patched-up, shredded odds and ends of different civilisations, all flung together in one unassimilable mass. On my first arrival in Bombay, I hired a horse-drawn cab to take me to the station (having a taste for going slowly on the rare occasions when the modern world permits it); the journey took a long time, and I began to wonder, as we jingled down one narrow, run-down street after another, whether the driver knew the way or even whether the hotel I had named really did exist. Bombay, too, seemed a strange city, consisting entirely of slums. The explanation, I afterwards discovered, was that traffic regulations forbade horse-cabs to use the main thoroughfares, for fear of slowing down the traffic flow. At any rate, my first impression was of a squalor more distressing than Old Delhi's, because more soulless and rootless. In Delhi, the poor quarters are entirely Indian in character, with huge whole clans (and their businesses) occupying one-room structures that look more like caves than anything else. Bombay has none of this Indian character; it didn't, I

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suppose, exist as a city until about eighty years ago, and then sprang into being as a centre of commercial exchange with the West; the buildings are like slummier versions of the slums of any Southern European town. If you are living in them I imagine it makes very little difference; all I am saying is that Delhi makes, to the eye, a much more unified impression. Bombay has the real crazy muddle of the Westernised Indian city: sitting back helplessly on the burst cushions, unable to cope with the flood of contradictory impressions, I gave up and just let the names over the shop-fronts flick across my vision: *Abdulla Phono Mart, Golden Art Studio, Lucky Laundry, Asian Surgical Co., Gandhi Silk House, Paradise General Stores.* And the restaurants—goodness knows what ghastly parody of East-West solidarity is enacted by the food they serve. (Later, I was to find out; but I won't describe, here, my adventures with low-priced Indian cuisine.) On that first slow, appalled gharry drive, I noted only that the dishes advertised were the usual mish-mash: one place had a notice which I copied down—*"Tea, Soda, Lemon, Custard, Cutlet, Cakes."* Were these dishes chosen simply at random to represent Western food, or were they proven favourites with the Bombay gourmands? Would they be surprised if I stopped the cab, went in and ordered cutlet, custard, and cakes? Or was the whole thing merely evidence of a passion for alliteration on the part of some long-past proprietor?

Suddenly the driver whipped up his horse, we emerged from a noisome side street into a wide one, and in a twinkling everything changed and the whole scene became modern. Here, immediately, was my hotel, there was the harbour with trim vessels of the Indian Navy floating keenly at anchor, there was the gigantic triumphal arch erected on the spot where King George V and his Queen stepped ashore on their first visit to India. (How many slum-dwellers, I caught myself wondering, would that labour have rehoused? But then, unlike George V and unlike most visitors, I had approached the arch through five miles of poverty and disease.) In the hotel, which is big, impersonal, and completely non-Indian (its architect evidently intended to allow for immediate conversion into a prison, all the room doors being visible from the top landing so that four armed men could easily control a thousand convicts), a message awaits me: an invitation to lunch at the house of one of Bombay's richest men, a well-known industrialist. Why does he invite me? How does he know of my existence? I don't know and it doesn't matter. I go. He is amiable, a good host, and his house is beautiful; we climb to a watch tower and look across the Malabar Hills and over the harbour. Poverty and overcrowding might be in another solar system instead of just down the road. Our host plays French cabaret songs and German *lieder* on the gramophone, talks fluent French to a Frenchman who is among the guests, and shows me his collection of Indian *objets d'art* in the diffident, off-hand manner of the connoisseur who loves his collection. He seems to make no particular distinction between Indian and European; Mozart and an ivory temple carving are both, it seems, "art," and he welcomes them about equally; is it just insularity that makes me feel like pointing out the vast differences, insisting that there is no definition of the word "art" that can possibly stretch to cover everything he has in his house? (No definition, that is, except "money," which is perhaps one we should use more often.)

We parted friends, for he was a gentle, unassuming man and I was grateful for his mildness and the ease of being in his company, and a day or two later I went to see his factory, which is run on paternalistic lines. The workers are not only employed in the factory but housed in dwellings built by the company and rented from it; they can live their entire lives, from birth to death, under the protective wing of the firm, by whose staff their children are educated, their diseases cured, their religious worship arranged for. In the West we are suspicious of such paternalism; we think of it, and perhaps rightly, as a means of sapping the workman's independence, making him less

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able to strike or disagree with the management, while at the same time cutting the firm's Income Tax bill. But Western ideas shrivel up in this harsh sunlight; does the Indian working man want independence or the power to strike, or does he want basic protection from want? The houses are neat and, by local standards, very comfortable. I went into one of them, at the invitation of the firm's publicity manager, who was conducting me. It contained, I was glad to see, a woman and a child. Female labour is not encouraged at the factory; if a man works, he can support a wife and family, and the woman is expected to stay at home; even in the little bare, swept stone box that is theirs, which could be cleaned and garnished from top to bottom in fifteen minutes, she is installed to make a home for her husband. This, though I shall be called a hypocrite and a sentimentalist for saying so, struck me as noble, even (in view of India's economics) heroic: a clinging to something basic in human life. If this were China, the woman would be at work and the child, who peers timidly at me and then bursts out crying because she thinks me a white-faced monstrosity, would be in a nursery-school learning to spell "CAPITALIST WARMONGER."

But then India is committed to doing things in an Indian way. All the superficial confusion of styles, which strikes one so hard at first, cannot mask the fact that there is an Indian way of doing things, and perhaps, if they believe in themselves enough, they will make their way work and the world will see that it is a better way than China's. The Indians themselves are clear enough about what sets them apart from China. One of their most able and incisive journalists, A. D. Gorwala, has set out an interesting catalogue of these differences, as they affect politics:

> Unlike China, we do not keep a defence force of over 4 million men and 4,000 planes. We do not obtain our equipment and arms free or on very easy terms from the Soviet Union. We do not have large numbers of Soviet advisers in key appointments. We do not conquer weak neighbouring countries like Tibet, calling it "liberation." ("From whom? I do not know," said Mr. Nehru at that time.) We do not publish maps including large areas of neighbouring countries, nor when asked about them say, "They are reproductions of old maps and mean nothing," and then attempt to get hold of some of the areas shown in those maps by sending in troops. We do not use nationals in other countries as a means of bringing them under our domination as Communist China tries to do in the countries of South-east Asia. We have no cause to which we wish to compel the citizens of other lands.... We do not flood other countries with propaganda publications and books for sale below cost. We do not give instructions and material help to political parties in other countries to serve our own purpose.
>
> Within the country, we do not have a dictatorship run by a small oligarchy. We do not have a legal system which makes the will of the rulers the law. We do not ban open discussion of public affairs. Our newspapers are not organs of the Government repeating whatever the press bureau tells them. We do not let the executive will decide court cases. We do not try people by mass meetings nor compel confessions by refined torture. We do not execute large numbers of men by making them kneel and then shooting them through the head from behind to the accompaniment of the revelry of merrily-dancing crowds. We have not murdered (the Communist Chinese term is "deprived of existence") about 12 million citizens in six years.
>
> We do not compel our people to obtain permission before buying railway tickets. We do not force them to join street committees so that their movements can be kept under watch. We do not "brain-wash" our people, nor make them agree to think as we like. We do not insist on their confessing whatever the Government feels they ought to confess. We do not make our peasants yield their lands by force to so-called "co-operatives," which take away most of their produce. We do not terrorise our people into compulsorily volunteering for any task the Government desires to have done. We do not have concentration camps. We do not regard as absurd the enjoyment of individual freedom by the citizen, nor as fantastic the selection of our government by free choice of the people at stated intervals. We do not look upon tolerance as an unconscionable hindrance but rather as the greatest good. We do not take refuge in the "double-speak" which means dictatorship when it says democracy, the Communist Party when it says the people, and tyranny when it says justice.

REASONS FOR NOT going Communist? Yes—as good a set as you'll find anywhere. And on the other side, the reasons *for* it also stare one in the face. That very morning, as I was in a taxi going to the factory, we halted at the traffic lights and in an instant the inevitable beggar was tapping on

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the glass; a half-grown youth, with a leg horribly twisted by some wasting disease, so that he was able to hold his club-foot at eye-level and wave it in front of me while he gestured for alms with his other hand. It seemed a long time till the lights changed. Communism is the only system which can put an end to such horrors quickly, by regimenting the population, squelching their individuality, butchering them if they resist, but in any case getting them off the streets and into productive work, if it is only slave labour.

That, in a few words, is the hideous dilemma facing any under-developed country. And that is why I am impressed and respectful as the young publicity manager shows me round the housing estate. Better to rob the workers of *some* of their individuality for the sake of feeding and housing them, when the only other alternative is to rob them of all of it.

The housing area is still only half-completed. The firm bought a large tract of land, about twenty years ago; they were accused of idle Utopianism, the land being unreclaimed scrub; up to about 1950 the factory had to close down before darkness fell, otherwise the workers going home were attacked by robbers, or walked over snakes and got bitten. Now, the scrub is cleared, night-shift work is possible, and the chief annoyance is the local village, whose inhabitants come in to beg from the people living in the houses; for, of course, there aren't jobs enough for *all* of them.

Driving back into town, listening to the bright up-to-date voice of the publicity manager, I realise that my social education is proceeding, however slowly. A week ago, I was scornful of paternalistic industrialism.

So MUCH FOR international politics. Back to India, the feel and smell of the streets, the oily waters of Bombay harbour. One glaring afternoon, I walk out of the hotel to buy myself a coconut; every few yards there are men selling them from booths, or simply from stacks on the ground—not the hard-shelled, matted kind we get at home, but green, hairless, with a skin only a little tougher than a fruit rind. You select one, the vendor cuts the top off, and inside is a pint of refreshing juice. I drink it all the time. Some odd little punctilio prevents me from applying for a Visitor's Permit to buy alcoholic drinks (if they can do without it, so can I, and it seems undignified to admit to an addiction), and the coconut juice is what I console myself with. Soft drinks are too horrible; tea, as the Indians make it, too strong. A good full-bodied cup of tea is one thing, but why do they have to make it so strong that you could walk on it without sinking? Is it a substitute for alcohol? If so, they should reintroduce alcohol immediately, in the interests of people's health.

But that, I know, is impossible, for religious reasons. Prohibition *may*, in the end, be shifted, but it will take tons of political dynamite. It is the radicals and the modernists, naturally, who want to end it; India's solitary tabloid newspaper, *Blitz*, is fond of printing horror-stories about the racketeers. (Can these stories be true? Could it possibly be true, for instance, that bootleggers employ lepers to deliver supplies to their customers, on the grounds that the police are unlikely to want to search them? And are there people so desperate for a drink that they will swill bath-tub hooch that has been transported under the ragged cloak of a leper? I switch my mind off. If this is prohibition, give me drunkenness.) But it will need more than *Blitz* to drive Indian politicians out of an attitude into which religious forces have directed them. Nothing, in India, has any importance beside religion: except, possibly, that other great national preoccupation, small trade.

THINKING OF *Blitz* brings to mind the Indian press—the English-language press, that is. I can only guess at the style and attitude of the Indian-language papers, which are generally poorer in funds, and designed to circulate among simpler people. Probably they would be a relief, if I could only read them. The English-language papers are, naturally, copied from Western,

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and generally British, models. *The Times of India* is grave, impartial, slightly pompous; *The Statesman* is a kind of Indian *Guardian*; of the others, the only one I saw much of was *Blitz*, which has taken over the methods of the *Mirror* and the *Sketch* and pushed them to the point of unconscious parody. Tabloid journalism is increasing in India, as it must in any country where there is a large uneducated but literate mass; the *Mirror* group, if I am not mistaken, already has a weekly paper, aimed at the Indian housewife, and making use of syndicated material from *Woman's Sunday Mirror*. But *Blitz* is the most tabloid tabloid I have ever seen or expect to see. It has a refreshing naïvety and innocence. Its editors know that the secret of tabloid journalism is sensationalism, discontinuity, crime and sex pictures with a minimum of text just to let the reader in on what's happening in the photograph. But, unlike their Western colleagues, they have no sense of what the Renaissance would have called "decorum"—keeping a unified style. If the *Mirror*, for example, wants to print some serious news, it condenses it into six lines and has it on the back page under the heading, "World News Spotlight." If *Blitz* wants to print serious news, it just fits it in on any page where there happens to be room. In the issue of 17th December, for instance, I read a full-page story about the decision of the Punjabi leader Sant Fateh Singh to enter upon a "fast unto death" in an effort to get the Government to reconsider its policy towards the Sikhs. This story, headed *"Appeal to the Conscience of the Nation"* and accompanied by a photograph of the fine, steadfast old man who is now solemnly undertaking to lay down his life, does not quite fill the page, so the top right-hand corner is given to a large picture of Mamie Van Doren, in typical pin-up pose, over the couplet:

> *Sex-appealfull, vervefull, charmfull,*
> *Mamie makes a curvefull armfull!*

Beat that, London! Personally, I hope *Blitz* never does learn to employ tabloid methods more smoothly; vulgarity is less harmful when it is completely undisguised.

The advertisements, as usual, are the most revealing things in the papers.

> PASSPORT TO ELEGANCE. Go anywhere, London, Paris, New York. You are sure to make your mark. Our Savile Row trained expert designer will see to it . . . giving your suits that rare quality of quiet distinction . . . that air of aplomb, and "prim and proper."

The picture shows a handsome, light-skinned Indian being measured for a suit, with Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament in the background. There's a political moral here somewhere. Let me design a nation's suits, and I care not who makes its laws.

An ad. for a film:

> *Is Bringing Revolution in Indian Homes!* PAPA: We want your love. . . Not your thoughts . . . We have our own thoughts . . . Sohrab Modi's proud offering, MERA GHAR MERE BACHCHAY. A picture of your home—your children.

In the illustration, Papa stands with clenched fists, glaring at the four young people, each represented by a head-and-shoulders and a large pointing hand, who are presumably seething with their own thoughts.

> This Sublime presentation is offered to achieve a better relationship between Teenagers and Parents and to Revolutionise domestic conditions influenced by the present pattern of living, towards Healthier, more Prosperous Life and Happier Homes!

On the front page of one of the most respectable papers:

> In Town Till Dec. 25th. India's Popular Scientific Astrologer, Jyotish Pundit RAM SWARUP SHARMA. Director, Indian Institute of Astronomical and Sanskrit Research and Editor of Jyotish Vigyan (monthly), New Delhi. He has predicted the death of Liaquat Ali Khan, Dismissal of General MacArthur, Election of Churchill as Prime Minister, Military Rule in Pakistan, Renaissance in Nepal. Until now he has prepared 2 lakhs of Janmakundlis. CONTACT PERSONALLY FOR PREPARING YOUR JANMAKUNDLIS SCIENTIFICALLY.

Janmakundlis, presumably, are horoscopes. I wonder what goes on at the Indian Institute of Astronomical and Sanskrit Research? Anyway, the title must be reassuring for those who want to look into the future "scientifically," for "Institute" is one of the great vogue-words of our time. Perhaps I ought to have found time to look in at the Pundit's headquarters ("Opposite Standard

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Vacuum Office") and ask a few questions. But I lacked the nerve. I know Indian salesmanship; sure as fate I should have come away with a Janmakundli, and I don't want one. If I must be talked into buying something, let it be a Standard Vacuum Cleaner.

VERY EARLY one morning, I take the train that climbs up out of sweltering Bombay and winds through beautiful mountain passes up to Poona. Poona!—the very word is a joke, recalling peppery Anglo-Indians in Cheltenham, with their ruined livers and autocratic ways. But from where I am now, these people don't seem so ludicrous; for two hundred years they governed this country, sticking it out with no air-conditioning, no antibiotics, no refrigeration. And not only governed it but made solid contributions to the study of its history, its languages, all the keys to its baffling nature. Even the literature of India owes something to Englishmen; the first person to write prose in Bengali, for instance, was a man called William Carey in the late 18th century. Before him, it had been used only for verse, in the usual way of primitive languages. Urdu, too, owes its first dictionary to John Gilchrist, principal of Fort William College, Calcutta. Scraps of information, scraps of information! But I can *see* the man, sitting in some steamy office, cursing the heat, snatching a few moments from his official work to make a few entries in his dictionary. And to-day, Indian scholars generously acknowledge the work of these amateurs.

Poona, of course, is a university town. The Governor's Residence, from which Bombay State used to be ruled during five months of every year, is the headquarters of the University, full of busy, bespectacled professors. I am to give a lecture; no university building is available, so I talk in a tin-roofed shed in a school. Lessons are over, and the playground is swarming with noisy, healthy children. When I appear, shepherded by the Principal, they stop their games and follow me, staring, till I am out of sight. Is an Englishman such a strange sight in Poona nowadays? I might be in Africa. But this, I soon discover, is rural India; university or no university, we are away from city life here. Darkness falls during my lecture, and bats wake up in the rafters above my head. Their squeaking, and the rustle of their leather wings, make a strange obbligato to the measured sentences of my lecture on "Modern English Literary Criticism." The students and professors sit silent on the benches, the bats squeak, the children yell in the playground, and I prose on about Values, and Reading Habits, spreading the fame of Leavis and Richards.

And hours later, when all the politenesses are over, when I have sat in the Principal's office exchanging this and that with the learned men who have come to hear me, we emerge and find that two of the boys from the school have been waiting patiently on the stairs. They have gifts for me: one gives me a picture of Mr. Nehru, another of Gandhi. (To counter any possible ignorance on my part he has written underneath the portrait, in careful script, "Mr. late Gandhi.") And this, too, is India.

THE ARRANGEMENTS have gone wrong; the professor who was to entertain me has to spend all his time at the hospital, where his mother lies ill. So the job falls to the little Principal. He does his best, though he is rather nervous. Perhaps I am the first non-Indian he has ever met, except on official business. He takes me to a restaurant where the main items on the menu are cholera and amoebic dysentery, and then he and his wife and I go for a walk through the crowded streets, ending up at his house. We talk about Education, for he is very determined to improve the occasion. I can't tell whether he is clever or not, because his English is hardly intelligible to me. (His wife doesn't speak it at all.) At about ten o'clock we get to their house. I am tired, and wonder how soon it would be polite to leave, but the Principal seems to like having me there. Tea is made. I know I shan't sleep if I drink it, but I drink it. The evening slowly turns into a nightmare. Then I notice the cockroaches.

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One is making straight for my feet. Not wanting him up my trouser-leg, I begin to shift and manœuvre. But soon I see another coming for me across the sofa. I get up, and stand in the middle of the room. A hatred of insects is one of my weaknesses, and it rises to the surface when I am tired. The Principal evidently sees nothing strange about my decision to stand in the middle of the floor; a quaint English custom, perhaps. So I stand there until he decides it is bedtime, and calls a taxi.

The next morning, again very early, the Principal calls to take me to the station. We get there with half-an-hour to spare (Indians are like Europeans in that the punctual ones are viciously punctual), and after a seat has been found for me, we get into the dining-car and order coffee. Over our cups we look at each other; neither of us has anything to say, but I feel how hard he has tried to cope with this strange frowning visitor, and I want to tell him I like him. I know, suddenly, that I am seeing Indian education, in the person of this little man, overworked and underpaid, living in his tiny house full of cockroaches. He wants so desperately to know what is being done in the world, and how he can distil some of that precious substance known as Education, and feed it to his pupils. Still neither of us can think of anything to say; at last I go and buy a newspaper, and make halting conversation about the headlines. Will the train never go? Then, suddenly, the Principal makes me a little speech, about how much he has appreciated talking things over with me. I don't know what to answer, but I put the speech into reverse and spool it back to him. Porters begin shutting doors; it is time; he gets out and we shake hands through the window. Good-bye, Principal! Indian education is another thing I shan't make jokes about any more. Perhaps, if this keeps up, I'll even learn to like cockroaches.

GOING DOWN the mountain in the train, I fall into conversation with a cultivated, prosperous-looking Parsee gentleman. He is well-informed, positive in his statements (he tells me, for instance, that Sweden was invaded by the Germans during the war, and won't allow me to contradict him). He is sceptical, to put it mildly, about the blessings of independence, and points out, with a fine scorn, how much of India's material progress is simply a legacy from the Raj. "They keep on celebrating anniversaries," he says, waving his hand at the scene outside the window as if to indicate that his satire includes the whole of the sub-continent. "Centenary of the railways, centenary of the telegraph cables: such nonsense! *Whose* railways? *Whose* cables?"

I don't know. After a few weeks in India, I don't think I could say with any confidence what belongs to whom. All I know is that whosever it is, there ought to be more of it, and soon.

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Harvey Einbinder

The Britannica

An American Critique of the Encyclopædia Business

ALMOST everyone at one time or another has been approached by an eager encyclopædia salesman who has promised to deliver, for a small sum down and a small remittance each month, a set of volumes containing the knowledge of the present and the wisdom of the past. Many people have been captured by this exciting prospect and have found themselves with a set of books that they later discovered was antiquated, poorly edited, and difficult to read.

The publication and distribution of encylopædias is a large and flourishing business in the United States. Sales of reference books have risen from $106 million in 1954 to $234 million in 1958. During 1960 more than $260 million will be spent by the American public on encyclopædias—a sum that is almost as great as the total expenditure for text-books of all kinds. The sum is much greater than the dollar volume of the nation's 1,500 bookstores and it makes the twelve million dollars spent on quality paperbacks, about which there is so much ballyhoo and publicity, seem rather puny and insignificant. The sales of a single firm, the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, currently exceed $70 million which almost equals the dollar volume of all adult books sold through stores. The distribution of encyclopædias is such a large and centralised business compared with other aspects of publishing that the financial resources of companies in the field are much greater than those of even the largest hard-back publishers. This permits many encyclopædia firms to engage in other ventures. Thus Crowell-Collier, which publishes *Collier's Encyclopædia* and the *Harvard Classics,* owns radio stations in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Minneapolis; and it has recently acquired control of the Macmillan Company, the fourth largest trade book publisher in the United States.

Although five companies enjoy large sales in America, as far as the general public is concerned, one work—the *Encyclopædia Britannica* —dwarfs all its competitors. The *Britannica* enjoys its unusual reputation thanks to an intensive programme of advertising and publicity combined with the host of famous scholars and authors who have contributed to the set. As a result, its name has become almost synonymous with the word "encyclopædia." This popular image has received official sanction in a full-length history which is appropriately called *The Great EB*. The author of this extended exercise in public relations, Herman Kogan, a former Chicago newspaper man, has been suitably rewarded for his efforts—he is now Director of Company Relations for the *Britannica*.

One curious anomaly of the encyclopædia business is that its products are almost never evaluated or criticised. Each week, magazines and newspapers devote many pages to the latest novel, biography, or bit of political journalism embalmed in hard covers, but almost nothing is printed about the reference works that are a major investment of the book-buying public. The merchandising of these works is a silent business beyond the reach of criticism and its success largely depends, not on the quality of its products, but on the skill and ingenuity of its salesmen.

IF TEXT-BOOKS SELDOM receive critical reviews, this is understandable since they are evaluated

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by school administrators, teachers, and professors whose professional training presumably enables them to discriminate between competing texts. But encyclopædias are purchased primarily by laymen who can scarcely judge whether or not they are getting a fair value for their money. One significant reason why encyclopædias are seldom reviewed is that critics are intimidated by the sheer bulk of these works. As a result, whenever such works must be reviewed, critics usually avoid the arduous task of examining their contents to determine their usefulness, reliability, and accuracy. Instead they merely repeat the publicity material furnished by the publisher. Consequently most encyclopædia reviews are merely a form of free advertising. They record the obvious features of the set, but carefully omit any comparison with competing encyclopædias which would aid consumers.

If the sale of reference books to-day is a large and prosperous business, it is likely to become even more so in the near future. The mounting stress on higher education as an indispensable asset and the increasing competition for entrance into a few select American "Ivy League" colleges, which have assumed a magic aura in middle-class circles, have made the labour of encyclopædia salesmen so much the easier. They are no longer forced to persuade people that knowledge is an important commodity and reference books a valuable possession. Parents are now eager to snatch at any aid that will assist their children in acquiring the advanced education which seems essential for their future social and financial prosperity. The businessmen who publish and sell encyclopædias have recognised this shift towards a child-oriented society and are acting accordingly.

THE new approach can be traced in the advertising programme of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Once upon a time, appeals were directed primarily to adults who were told that ownership of the *Britannica* would make them socially stimulating and intellectually respected. This was a natural approach because the *Encyclopædia* is a reference work intended for adult readers. But now this appeal has been superseded by a new, more persuasive line aimed at the parents of young children. This "new look" in encyclopædia selling can be documented by a series of advertisements that appeared in the Sunday Book Section of the *New York Times* during 1959. On February 1st parents were asked:

> *"Which is more important to your child.... The size of his home or the size of his mind?"*

And they were told: "The first step in enlarging the mind is knowledge, and that is why thinking parents put the acquisition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* before any other possession." This positive statement that the ownership of a set of books—the right set of books—is just what every home needs is reassuring to anxious parents who find their children are more interested in television and comic books than in reading and studying.

On August 23rd a deeper note was struck when parents were asked:

> *"Are you giving your children more than you had?"*

Such a stern question can hardly fail to stimulate the sensitive nerves of suburban American mothers. Once their anxiety is aroused, they are informed that if they "want to give their children this priceless gift of knowledge—the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is an essential possession. With this world-famous treasure of knowledge in your home, your children will soon develop the habit of 'looking it up in the *Britannica*'—a habit that will help them acquire a standard of life to sustain them throughout life."

To lend further distinction to these advertisements, they appear under the name of Dr. J. Chapman Bradley, who presumably is an educator or a distinguished child psychologist. But there is some difficulty in finding out more about Dr. Bradley's credentials. He is not listed in *Who's Who in America*, or *Who's Who in American Education*, or in any of the other standard biographical reference works. Fortunately, however, his background is briefly described by Herman Kogan in *The Great EB*. Mr. Kogan relates that Dr. Bradley served as an ordained Presbyterian minister for a decade, and then was a top executive of the American Bible Society. He invented display plates for automobiles and once headed a company that sold them. Since 1946 Dr. Bradley has been with the *Britannica*—first as a salesman in the Bronx, and then as a district and finally a division manager in Chicago. Presumably Dr. Bradley's important sales position makes him an authority in describing why the *Encyclopædia* is an essential aid in educating youngsters.

The *Britannica* has gone even further in its

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hypnotic appeal to anxious parents. The high point was undoubtedly reached in the *New York Times* on September 27th, at the beginning of the school year, when parents were asked:

> *"How can you express the inexpressible love you feel for your child?"*

Lest parents be at a loss for an answer, they were instructed in the EB catechism: "Probably the most concrete way in which we show a genuine concern for our children is in the concern we have for their education.... There can be no doubt that a respect for knowledge exists in a home where the *Encyclopædia Britannica* is a valued possession."

To make sure that this point will sink home, the message is accompanied by a touching picture of a mother and her small son—who can hardly be more than five years old. Having successfully aroused the deep-seated instincts of parental love and responsibility, sales executives can sit back and confidently await the flood of little coupons which will bring parents the booklet containing a preview of the latest edition and an inevitable visit from a smooth-talking salesman.

THE FACT that the *Britannica* is not intended for children, and cannot be used by children because of its scholarly and highly technical content, is immaterial as far as advertising managers are concerned. Their job is to increase sales, and the truth of their copy is secondary. Their goal is to fashion an irresistible sales message which will make the EB *appear* indispensable to any parent who is concerned for the welfare of his children. Therefore it is only natural that advertising men should play on the sensitivity of middle-class parents who are frightened by the prospect that they may be unwittingly depriving their children of some precious asset required for their future success.

OF COURSE, encyclopædias are not the only reference works that indulge in bold claims. Collegiate dictionaries make a practice of exaggerating the number of vocabulary entries they contain. Perhaps the most striking example in this field is the *Merriam-Webster New International Dictionary*. An advertisement appearing in the February 1961 issue of *Harper's*, as well as many other magazines, extolls this dictionary by announcing that it "ANSWERS MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANY OTHER REFERENCE WORK ... for a fraction of the price you'd expect to pay!" The advertising copy states that this unabridged dictionary "is the world's greatest 'information centre'—equivalent in printed material to an 18-volume encyclopædia ... containing so much encyclopædic matter that it has become famous as the 'great question answerer.' It covers the entire range of man's knowledge of this eventful era."

The advertising message fails to mention, however, that the text of the *Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary* was completed in 1934, and that its 2,987 pages have been reprinted without change ever since that date. The only concession to this "eventful era" is a brief Addenda of new words which occupies 40 pages in the front of the work. This sort of thing is possible because the G. & C. Merriam Company has no effective competition in the field of unabridged dictionaries. Consequently it can offer the public its somewhat antiquated "question answerer" without any fear of losing sales. The Company once followed the same policy with its *Collegiate Dictionary* by reprinting the text without change for years—with the exception of a brief introductory section containing New Words. But now Merriam-Webster has abandoned this policy because two competing publishers are producing college dictionaries that are continually revised.

THE MARKETING OF ENCYCLOPÆDIAS in the U.S.A. is one of the last strongholds of direct selling. To attract likely prospects, many interesting techniques have been devised. One of the oldest is a phone call from a salesman who announces the good news that you have been selected to receive a set free of charge because you are such a distinguished leader in your community. Later when the salesman arrives to discuss the matter, he tells you, oh yes, there is a small charge (of several hundred dollars), but he assures you the cost is far below what an ordinary consumer can buy the encyclopædia for. The figure mentioned, of course, is exactly the same that everyone else pays.

This technique was described in detail by E. H. Powell, who served for many years as the *Britannica*'s chief executive officer, in an article appearing in the *Saturday Evening Post* on July 28th, 1945. When Mr. Powell first discovered that EB salesmen were using this devious approach, he was appalled and ordered a thorough reform of the sales staff to eliminate this unethical practice. But Mr. Powell left the

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Britannica in 1948. As many Americans have learned, this ancient method has been revived by salesmen and executives whose desire for additional income has overcome their moral scruples.[1]

AGGRESSIVE salesmanship coupled with continued economic prosperity has resulted in an enormous increase in *Britannica* sales during the last eight years. Income from the *Encyclopædia* alone has risen from $12 million in 1952 to $55 million in 1959. The Company also markets the *Great Books of the Western World* (containing the *Syntopicon*), a Dictionary, an Atlas, and a bookcase to house the *Britannica*. Consumers are reminded in advertisement after advertisement of the benefits of this increased sales volume. Thus they are told in a lavish two-page colour spread in *Life* magazine (November 21st, 1960):

> The latest edition of the *Britannica* . . . is the greatest in our almost 200-year publishing history. An *enormous printing* materially reduces our costs and under an unusual direct-from-the-publisher plan, we pass these savings on to you.

Despite this claim and the fact that almost 200,000 sets are now sold each year, the price of the *Britannica* has remained unchanged since 1949. The savings from this enormous printing are not all passed on to consumers—some of them are being shared by salesmen, executives, and the owners. This is confirmed by an interview published in the *New York Times* in which Mr. William Benton stated that a good salesman can earn $20,000 a year selling the *Britannica*; district sales managers receive about $70,000 a year.[2]

The lavish rewards offered to sales personnel are a familiar aspect of the encyclopædia business—the meagre payments made to editorial contributors follow inevitably from the emphasis placed on salesmanship rather than scholarship. Generally, encyclopædias like to boast about the vast sums they spend in preparing new editions while remaining reticent about their payments to authors. The *Britannica*, however, is an exception: it makes a special point of the fact that its contributors are paid only 2 cents a word. It likes to recall that Bernard Shaw received only $68.50 for his essay on "Socialism" and Albert Einstein $86.50 for his article on "Space-Time." If one is to believe the *Encyclopædia*'s editors, they have never had difficulty in recruiting contributors even at these low rates. According to *The Great EB*, "Many experts and scholars realise the prestige attached to being asked to contribute to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and less than 2 per cent of those invited have ever declined." Apparently, scientists and scholars have little interest in being paid in cash for their efforts—nebulous honours and prestige are sufficient. It is interesting to note that although the *Britannica* publicly boasts that it has paid contributors at the rate of 2 cents a word ever since 1929, it always neglects to mention that the set cost cost only $129.50 in 1929, while to-day its price is $298.

MANY encyclopædias make elaborate claims about their coverage, accuracy, and completeness, even though their owners concentrate on selling the work rather than on improving its contents. Consequently the quality of such encyclopædias is often far from impressive. Sometimes they neglect important contemporary developments despite their practice of annual revision. The *Britannica*'s lapses are particularly striking because of its great reputation for scholarship, reliability, and modernity. The editors claim that every article in the *Encyclopædia* is considered for revision at least once every five years, yet the 1960 edition does not mention the Lascaux Cave Paintings discovered in 1940. There is no reference in the

[1] The dubious sales tactics employed by the Company have attracted the attention of the United States Government. In 1952, the Federal Trade Commission in Washington issued a "Cease and Desist Order" to halt the Company's "School Advancement Programme," which was being used to sell the *Britannica Junior*, because this programme was falsely represented to consumers as a means of aiding schools when it was really a device for selling books. In July 1958, hearings were held by the F.T.C. in Chicago to investigate charges that the *Britannica* was being offered to consumers at special prices. The Initial Decision of the Hearing Examiner was released to the public in September, 1960: it stated that *Britannica* prices for a combination of books and research material had been falsely advertised. The examiner found that the advertised price of $511.50 contained in a typical brochure furnished to salesmen "is fictitiously padded in the amount of $120." This Initial Decision has been disputed by the *Britannica*, and a spokesman for the Company has stated that the examiner's findings will be appealed to the full commission because the *Encyclopædia* has always adhered to the highest selling standards.

[2] Within the last two years, the Company has reorganised its sales organisation and increased the commission of its salesmen from 15 to 25 per cent. Consequently, U.S. salesmen now receive $75 for each set they sell.

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text or the index to Strontium-90, and there is nothing of substance on radioactive fall-out—a subject which has been a matter of grave international concern for the past six years—yet Norman Cousins and Adlai Stevenson, who are members of the *Britannica*'s Board of Editors, have repeatedly stressed the importance of this issue. Despite the current excitement over satellites, sputniks, and space flight, the article on Mars has remained unchanged for the last thirty years; yet Dr. Robert Hutchins, Chairman of the *Encyclopædia*'s Board of Editors, has stated recently, "One thing can be said with certainty, and that is that the *Britannica* reflects modern scholarship."

Despite Dr. Hutchins's confident assurance, many articles in the 1960 edition are one, two, and three generations old, an aspect of the work that is not widely publicised. Among the articles reprinted from the eleventh edition of 1910–1911 are the entries on Dante, Chaucer, and Cervantes; Pope, Byron, Swift, and Swinburne; Goethe, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Rimbaud; as well as those on Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, and Wagner. So many of these articles are pedestrian factual accounts that it is difficult to believe they have been retained because of their literary or critical excellence.

EVEN MORE SURPRISING is the presence of material taken from the ninth edition, which was first issued in individual volumes over a period of fourteen years from 1875 to 1889. Such ancient articles, which are from seventy-one to eighty-four years old, include the current entries on Sophocles, Aristophanes, and Pindar; Thackeray, Congreve, Coleridge, and Shelley, as well as those on Voltaire, Michelangelo, Rubens, and Rembrandt. Originally many of these articles were in fact distinguished literary essays, but they have been sharply condensed to make room for additional material in science and technology; they now appear as dry, arid accounts whose facts have often been corrected by later research.[3]

The zenith of the *Britannica*'s evolution as a reference work was reached when the eleventh edition was issued in twenty-nine monumental volumes in 1910–1911. This edition was largely the work of English and Scottish professors—of 1,500 contributors, only 120 were Americans. A decade after the eleventh edition appeared, Sears Roebuck, a Chicago mail order house, acquired control of the *Encyclopædia*; and when it published the fourteenth edition in 1929, a new American influence became evident as the *Britannica* was popularised, "humanised," and adulterated to reach a wider audience. In 1943, a former advertising executive, William Benton, and the University of Chicago gained possession of the work, and they succeeded in turning the set into a veritable gold mine. The *Britannica* has yielded more than $20 million in profits and royalties during the last eighteen years, and it now earns more than $3 million a year for its fortunate owners.

The *Book of the Year* is issued annually in separate English and American editions to keep *Encyclopædia* subscribers abreast with current developments. It contains biographical notices on leading personalities associated with the *Britannica* who are not sufficiently important to merit insertion in the *Encyclopædia* itself. Such individuals include William Benton, Robert Hutchins, and Lawrence Kimpton, Chancellor of the University of Chicago. Sir Geoffrey Crowther joined this select circle after he was appointed Chairman of the Encyclopædia Britannica Ltd. in 1956. His biography appears in the 1957 and 1958 *Book of the Year* and reports he is "bringing to this essentially Anglo-American enterprise a firm belief in the indispensability of the transatlantic alliance."[4]

WHEN the eleventh edition was published in 1910–1911, the British Empire was at its zenith and the "English way of life" was being emulated around the world. The *Encyclopædia* was issued under the auspices of Cambridge University, and as a vehicle of English learning and culture, it was natural that the set should emphasise the nation's literature, history, and tradition. This insular point of view was accentuated because the work was the first major

[3] The entry on the Duke of Wellington still carries a footnote listing two possible places and dates for his birth. This footnote was first attached to the original article when it appeared in the ninth edition seventy years ago, and it has been retained for three generations, even though it has long been established by the evidence of contemporary Irish newspapers and the sworn testimony of Wellington's parents that he was born in Merrion Street in Dublin on May 1st, 1769.

[4] However, in November, 1959, Sir Geoffrey was replaced as Chairman of EB Ltd. by Senator William Benton, who is also Chairman of the American company; thus assuring that "this essentially Anglo-American enterprise" will be properly directed from the Senator's Madison Avenue office in New York. Needless to say, the biographical entry on Sir Geoffrey no longer appears in the American *Book of the Year*.

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edition of the *Britannica* to include entries on living persons. The result was a flood of notices on contemporary English notables whose achievements were recorded at great length so that the *Encyclopædia* became a virtual Who's Who of British life.

This national bias was attacked in 1917 by Willard Huntington Wright who pointed out in a book, *Misinforming a Nation*, that many major European figures including Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Cezanne were omitted from the eleventh edition. Despite Wright's criticism, it is surprising to discover that many forgotten Victorians still occupy valuable space in the 1960 edition. Their biographies have been reprinted from the eleventh edition, even though the modern set has only 38 million words compared with the 44 million words of the 1911 edition. Such "famous" Victorians include the composers, John Hatten, Joseph Barnby, and Sterndale Bennett; the painters, William Etty, George Watts, and John Gilbert; as well as the Victorian poets, Charles Wells and John Davidson. Each of these British "notables" receives an entry, but there are no articles on Benjamin Britten, W. H. Auden, or Jackson Pollock.

In many instances, the modern *Encyclopædia* has retained the reverent, respectful treatment of eminent Victorians adopted by the eleventh edition. A good example is the article on Sir Jonathan Hutchinson (1828–1913), a distinguished Harley Street physician who served as president of the Royal College of Surgeons. The article describes one of Sir Jonathan's leading medical contributions in the following words:

> His book, *Leprosy and Fisheating* (1906), exposed many popular errors, though his conclusion regarding a definite connection between the disease and the eating of salted fish has not been generally accepted.

Although the eleventh edition was widely acclaimed as a monument of British scholarship, it was not immune from criticism. An article appearing in *Science* in 1912 pointed out that the history of non-Euclidean geometry furnished by A. N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell contained several significant errors. In particular, undue prominence was given to Gauss who never published anything on the subject, and an attempt was made to link Gauss and Bolyai who actually worked independently. Furthermore, Gauss' formula for the circumference of a circle was printed incorrectly. It is somewhat disconcerting to find these errors reproduced in the 1960 edition which has reprinted Whitehead and Russell's contribution.[5]

Scientific subjects were often treated in the eleventh edition in a hopelessly technical manner. Frequently entries were filled with mathematical formulas and technical details far beyond the comprehension of the general reader. To-day such articles, with their dense array of equations, recall the atmosphere of the Cambridge Mathematical Tripos, and they may remind older scientists of the ponderous English mathemical texts of their youth (*cf.* Hobson's *Spherical Harmonics*). Since the eleventh edition, great progress has been made in presenting scientific subjects in a manner that can be grasped by an educated layman, and many contemporary articles in the *Britannica* are masterly examples of scientific exposition. Sometimes, however, an author forgets the needs of the public and decides to provide instruction for his colleagues rather than the ordinary reader. A good example is the article on "Logic" which begins by enunciating Łukasiewicz's axioms of the propositional calculus,

$$1.\ p \supset q \supset \cdot q \supset r \supset \cdot p \supset r$$
$$2.\ \sim p \supset p \supset p$$
$$3.\ p \supset \cdot \sim p \supset q$$

and then proceeds to derive a number of logical theorems with the aid of the symbolism and operations of the propositional calculus. The presence of such a highly-technical article is hard to explain, particularly when *Britannica* editors firmly remind contributors that they are writing for "a person of average education who is in search of clear and simple information." Despite this admonition, the desire to impress other specialists is often victorious. This is illustrated by the entry on "Topology" which is filled with mathematical material of a singularly advanced type. Its character may be suggested by a single definition:

> The 1-dimensional "Betti number modulo 2 of K," denoted by $p^1(K, 2)$ (or simply p^1 when the modulo 2 algebraic operations are understood to be used without explicit mention), is the greatest number of 1-cycles $Z_1^1, Z_2^1, \ldots, Z_{p1}^1$

[5] The only difference is that their historical treatment of non-Euclidean geometry has been sharply condensed and the initials identifying them as the authors have disappeared. As a result, neither Russell nor Whitehead is listed as a contributor—an omission that seems rather strange considering the *Encyclopædia*'s penchant for boasting about the number of Nobel Prize-winners who have contributed to the work.

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of K that satisfy no homology of the form $a_1{}^1Z_1{}^1 + \ldots + a_i{}^1Z_i{}^1 + \ldots a_{p_1}{}^1Z_{p_1}{}^1 \sim 0$ modulo 2, where the coefficients $a_i{}^1$ are all 0 or 1 but not all 0 (we make the convention that $0 \sim 0$).

Is such mathematical exposition really "suitable for children" who are supposed to find the *Encyclopædia* a storehouse of useful information?

ANY shortcomings that may exist in the *Britannica* are discreetly ignored in its promotional material which asks the public to accept the authority of its articles without question. An advertisement appearing in the September 27th, 1960, issue of *Look* Magazine boldly announces: *"It is truth. It is unquestionable fact. And it is the beginning, the support, and the constant touchstone of education."* Yet the article on Galileo, which has just been revised for the 1960 edition, repeats the discredited story that Galileo gave all the professors and students of the university a visual demonstration from the Leaning Tower of Pisa that different weights fall with the same velocity. This fanciful legend was first reported by the biographer Viviani in 1654, more than sixty years after the experiment was supposed to have occurred.

Its utility as a "constant touchstone of education" may be suggested by the entry on Shakespeare which contains no discussion of his plays and the survey article on "Sculpture" which fails to note the existence of abstract sculpture as exemplified by the creative activity of Brancusi, Calder, and Henry Moore. The 1960 edition continues to reprint eccentric and outdated opinions of Sir Donald Francis Tovey on modern music that now furnish more amusement than critical insight. His essay on "Chamber Music" reports:

> The trombone and side-drums in the chamber music of Stravinsky will do well enough in a very smart house-party where all the conversation is carried on in an esoteric family slang, and the guests are expected to enjoy the booby-traps.

Tovey curtly dismisses Schönberg's early theory of added fourths in the article on "Harmony" by stating:

> Arnold Schönberg's harmonic theory is often masterly in its analysis of classical music; but it is extremely disappointing in its constructive aspect. . . . Schönberg's theory rests on no observation at all. . . . To find the composer of the *Gurrelieder* fathering such theories is as disconcerting as to discover Einstein telling fortunes in Bond Street.

THESE ARE BY NO MEANS the only outlandish examples that can be discovered in the *Encyclopædia*'s pages. Careful examination soon reveals remnants from the Victorian era. A telling example is the current article on Rabelais, which was written originally by George Saintsbury for the ninth edition. Saintsbury, as a good Victorian, is forced to deal with the "great blemish of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*—their extreme coarseness of language and imagery." He explains that Rabelais' errors looked at from an absolute standard are, of course, unpardonable—but, judged relatively, he may be excused because:

> Rabelais's coarseness, disgusting as it is, has nothing of the corruption of refined voluptuousness about it, and nothing of the sniggering corruption which disgraces men like Pope, like Voltaire, and like Sterne. The general taste having been considerably refined since, Rabelais has in parts become nearly unreadable—the worst and most appropriate punishment for his faults.

Saintsbury's initials have long since disappeared from this article, which has been revised recently. The revision consisted in adding a new bibliography and reprinting Saintsbury's 19th-century text—a rapid and economical method that is often employed by editors to bring the *Britannica* "up-to-date."

One can not only find the prudery of the Victorian era in the latest edition, but also some of the fanciful beliefs of an earlier age. An amusing illustration is the essay on "Spiritualism" by Sir Oliver Lodge: it reports that careful investigators of the Society for Psychical Research, founded in London, "have accumulated a great mass of evidence" in favour of spiritualism. Sir Oliver describes the powerful force of "exteriorised protoplasm now generally known as ectoplasm" in the following terms:

> The force exerted by ectoplasm can be quite considerable. For instance, a table can be raised completely off the ground; and the weight of a man clambering on the table need not be sufficient to bring it down. The forces have sometimes been measured by spring balances. . . . In quoting such assertions it is not supposed that they are as yet fully accepted; but they indicate the lines on which the investigation should proceed.

Sir Oliver's rambling essay on Spiritualism has been reprinted for the last generation. Fortunately, however, the 1960 edition also contains an article on "Psychical Research" which is far more critical and scientific in character.

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Such inconsistency between different entries is the bane of encyclopædia editors. It frequently occurs whenever the index of a reference work fails to record all the information in its pages. Thus the 1960 *Britannica* contains a long article on the "Dead Sea Scrolls," but the discussion of the "Manuscripts of the Bible" ignores the discovery of an Isaiah roll among the Dead Sea Scrolls which is more than a thousand years older than the traditional Hebrew Masoretic text. There is a major entry on the "Minoan Linear Scripts" which describes how the British scholar Michael Ventris succeeded in unravelling the Linear B Script without the aid of a bi-lingual text by means of a brilliant hypothesis that the script is a form of archaic Greek. Yet the essay on "Aegean Civilisation" in the first volume states that Minoan records "are undeciphered and likely to remain so, except in the improbable event of the discovery of a long bi-lingual text, partly couched in some familiar script and language."

It is bad enough when different articles contradict each other, but what can one say when the same entry offers contradictory information? A striking instance is the article on "Richard III": it wavers between the popular tradition created by Tudor historians that depicts Richard as a mis-shapen monster whose name is synonymous with wickedness, and the subdued portrait presented by modern scholars who have rehabilitated his reputation. The article reports in its final paragraph:

> Tradition represents Richard as deformed. It seems clear that he had some physical defect, though not so great as has been alleged. Extant portraits show an intellectual face characteristic of the early Renaissance, but do not indicate any deformity.

Earlier in the article, however, this judicious caution is thrown aside as the Tudor version of the tumultuous events of 1483 is recorded:

> On June 13 came the famous scene when Richard appeared suddenly in the council baring his withered arm and accusing Jane Shore and the Queen of sorcery; Hastings, Morton, and Stanley were arrested and the first-named at once beheaded.

Thus Richard suddenly appears in the article as a monster with a withered arm! Shakespeare employs this incident to create an exciting scene in which Richard cries,

> *Look how I am bewitch'd; behold, mine arm*
> *Is like a blasted sapling, wither'd up.*
> *And this Edward's Wife, that monstrous witch,*
> *Consorted with that harlot strumpet Shore,*
> *That by their witchcraft thus have marked me.*

This striking scene was invented by Sir Thomas More and copied by Shakespeare. Actually, Richard had Hastings seized and beheaded for treason, not witchcraft, yet the *Britannica* zealously repeats the story as if it were unquestionably true.[6]

If a British reader is disturbed by the treatment of Richard III, what is an American to think when he examines the entry on Franklin Delano Roosevelt and discovers that it was written by Allan Nevins twenty-five years ago and has been reprinted ever since? The only change has been to add two brief paragraphs on the presidential elections of 1936, 1940, and 1944. There is no bibliography attached to the article, and for information on Roosevelt's second and third terms, the reader is directed to the entry on the "United States." One might suspect that this inadequate notice has been retained because F.D.R. is still a controversial figure in certain American circles, but surely this seems rather far-fetched since William Benton and Adlai Stevenson, both Liberal Democrats, are members of the *Britannica*'s Board of Editors. A much more plausible explanation is the fact that if the 1¾-page article on Franklin Roosevelt were expanded to include the events of his second and third terms, it would be necessary to disturb the "classic" five-page article on Theodore Roosevelt which has been reprinted for the last thirty years.

It would be easy to multiply illustrations of the *Encyclopædia*'s failure to live up to its exalted popular image, but it may be rather futile to attack the *Britannica*'s contents in a brief article. When I offered a critical appraisal last winter in the *Columbia University Forum*, Dr. Robert Hutchins complained in a published communication in the Spring issue that my criticism was superficial because I singled out only 90 of the *Encyclopædia*'s 42,000 entries. Such partial coverage is inevitable in a short article, and it offers an easy way in which to neutralise any unfavourable comment.[7]

[6] This assurance extends to the greatest mystery of English history—the fate of the "little Princes." According to the *Encyclopædia*, "There seems no reasonable doubt that early in August, Edward V and his brother Richard . . . were murdered by their uncle's orders"; but this certainty is not shared by modern scholars.

[7] This has made it necessary for me to prepare a full-length book to document fully the disparity that exists between the *Britannica*'s popular reputation and its actual contents.

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THE profit instinct has always been a powerful motive in stimulating the efforts of encyclopædia publishers. In the past, publishers have been content to leave editors with a free hand once they allocated the necessary funds. Robertson Smith, who served as an editor of the ninth edition, stated that he seldom heard from the owners—his principal contact was by letters which would arrive at periodic intervals containing a long slip of paper. At the top of the slip was printed THE BANK OF ENGLAND, and at the bottom was the signature of A. & C. Black. Matters are quite different to-day when publishers carefully regulate every step in the production of reference works—from their initial inception to their final manufacture, promotion, and sale. Often, one could infer, they are guided as businessmen, not by the requirements of scholarship, but by the findings of "market research" as they consciously strive to launch reference works that will appeal to a broad group of consumers.

The importance of isolating the commercial spirit from the objectives of scholarship is clearly demonstrated by the history of the *Britannica*. When the great eleventh edition was issued fifty years ago, the work was owned by two shrewd and aggressive Americans, Horace Hooper and Walter Jackson. They promoted the set with a bold and vigorous advertising campaign that overwhelmed the resistance of consumers. But editorial control over the work rested firmly in the hands of the London *Times*, which had been receiving royalties ever since 1898. Hooper and Jackson were unable to exert any influence on the contents of the set because *The Times* assumed full responsibility for the preparation of the eleventh edition, and the editor of *The Times*, Moberly Bell, would not allow the reputation of his newspaper to be compromised by commercial considerations. Matters are quite different to-day. The *Encyclopædia* is owned jointly by William Benton and the University of Chicago,[8] and one is driven to conclude that they seem content to measure the success of their enterprise by the number of sets sold.

The mediocre quality of many of our contemporary American reference works confirms the truism that the goals of scholarship and the aims of salesmanship are not synonomous. At best, sound works are produced when there is active competition and a large well-defined market. This is the case with collegiate dictionaries and junior encyclopædias. But the commercial spirit is incapable of providing an incentive for scaling the heights of scholarship. Massive projects, such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* which took seventy years to complete, would never have been carried through if they depended on their commercial prospects. Such enterprises can never hope to compete with popular works intended for a large audience; yet the progress of learning depends on such scholarly undertakings.

THIS SITUATION HAS BECOME more than a matter of private concern to professors and scholars. To-day knowledge has become a vital instrument in the expression of national policy. This has been recognised for some time in the Soviet Union. The editors of the second edition of *The Great Soviet Encyclopædia* were given explicit instructions by the Council of Ministers for their work to be written from a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint to show the "superiority of Socialist culture" and the "degeneracy of capitalist society." The resulting fifty-one volume Russian encyclopædia completed in 1958 faithfully reflects the communist belief that truth and objectivity must be subservient to the political interests of the Communist Party. If this encyclopædia truly represents the spirit of the Soviet Union, what must we say of the patched-up, makeshift *Encyclopædia Britannica*?[9]

The emphasis on business goals rather than scholarship during the past decade may help to explain some of the surprising lapses that have occurred in the set. Until the 1954 edition, the *Britannica* offered a rather astonishing prophecy in an article on "Pacific Ocean Questions." It stated: "One of the most interesting of Pacific questions is how far Bolshevik Russia will succeed in the Orient. In China its propaganda is probably doomed to failure because of the almost universal peasant-proprietorship." The *Encyclopædia*'s neglect of contemporary developments has, on occasion, led to foreign protests. Late in 1958, a Singapore newspaper editor complained

[8] For tax purposes, Sears and Roebuck gave the University of Chicago complete ownership of the *Britannica* as a gift; and the University transferred two-thirds of its interest to William Benton in return for $100,000 in working capital which he advanced.

[9] The relative weight accorded to scholarship and sales promotion may be suggested by the following consideration. At the current rate of 2 cents a word, if all the words in the *Britannica* were to be replaced, the total payment to contributors would be less than $800,000. This sum is far smaller than the *Encyclopædia*'s annual U.S. advertising budget, which now equals four million dollars a year.

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about the article on the "Malays" which reported:

> The Malays are indolent, pleasure-loving, improvident, fond of bright clothing, of comfort, of ease, and dislike toil exceedingly. They have no idea of money, and little notion of honesty where money is concerned.... They are addicted to gambling, and formerly were much given to fighting, but their courage is not high judged by European standards. The sexual morality of the Malays is very lax....

This passage was written by a British colonial official for the eleventh edition and has been reprinted for almost fifty years. According to *Time* magazine, when John V. Dodge, Managing Editor of the *Britannica*, was asked about this passage, his abashed reply was: "I wish to say we are embarrassed by the paragraph you quote.... It obviously should have been replaced long ago—and I cannot say why it was not."

The newly-independent nations of Asia and Africa look to Britain and America for more than pounds and dollars: they seek technical skills and specialised knowledge that will assist them in passing from backward countries into industrialised societies. It is important that the leaders of these countries gain an understanding of the achievements of western culture and its values of personal freedom and free intellectual inquiry. An encyclopædia can play a significant role in this educational task because it synthesises the whole circle of learning within the confines of a single set of volumes. As a vehicle for the communication of knowledge and ideas, it can be readily transported to the far corners of the earth, and its wealth of information makes the work particularly valuable in backward countries which lack adequate library facilities and institutions of higher learning. In view of the current competition between the East and the West for "the minds of men," may it not be a hazardous luxury to accept the present state of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* merely because "it is the best there is"? I suggest that the English-speaking community to-day requires something far better: a work that will truly represent the persistent and unfettered search for truth that is a distinguishing mark of a free society.

Sebastian

Like afterthoughts, the last sharp arrows came
And bedded in his side. They made of his
White flesh a garden like Gethsemane
Where angels wandered among leafy wounds.

The Romans left him but he could not die.
At last, he felt hands stir upon his wounds
And cried aloud! — where had the angels flown? —
As you have known me cry out at your touch.

Michael Fried

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Robert Kee

The Refugees

LAST SUMMER I *made a tour of the refugee areas of Germany and Austria to see how the end of World Refugee Year had left the refugees themselves. The following extracts are taken from an account of that journey. But it must be emphasised that the refugee situation in Europe is only one very small example of the total world refugee problem. The suffering that comes from being uprooted from home by fear, and the call on our sense of responsibility, is, in our time, continuous. Because the refugee situation in Germany and Austria illustrates so much of what should and should not be done with refugees it serves perhaps better than any other, both as an inspiration and a warning for the future. For refugee situations are to-day as much a permanent feature of our civilisation as was, in the Middle Ages, the plague.*

I HAD SO OFTEN seen "official" camps distinguished from "unofficial" ones on paper that I had somehow expected them to look different. I suppose I had even thought that they would look better. My first sight of the official camp at Unterjettingen brought me back to reality.

The approach was pleasant enough. We left the highway and drove up a winding road through cornfields. It would have been pleasanter if we hadn't known that we were going to a camp at the end of it; the knowledge made it a lonely road. Soon we were driving into a darkening pinewood. A fine rain started to come down, and with it a sense of isolation and gloom.

Barbed wire, all strength and purpose long since rusted from it, appeared strung along posts among the trees. We turned in through a gap on to the site of an old *Wehrmacht* ammunition dump.

A number of different sorts of hutches lay rotting in the rain on the floor of the wood. Some were lavatories, some wood-sheds; some held rabbits and others people.

There was a welcoming shout. An everyday life of a sort was going on here. A woman who recognised the United Nations High Commissioner's representative, a Norwegian called Høst, shouted that she had a letter in Norwegian about her three children who were on holiday in Norway, and she wanted him to translate it for her. We went up some steps into her room.

Soon I was to find it difficult to react spontaneously when shown with dignity round these innumerable sad, almost identical little rooms, with their cheap furniture stubbornly trying to assert some pride in the crowded space, and the flowers and trailing plants striking a sudden, sophisticated note. Now curiosity was still alive. Ignorance prompted questions. It was still possible to be taken by surprise by the flowers.

Mrs. Rosa Kerekes, a Hungarian, had three rooms, in one of which was a stove. All were clean and neat. But there was the same smell that I had noticed in other camps—a smell of old cooking and sweaty clothes which had long ago saturated damp wood and re-emerged in its own right. Her husband was dead, but she just kept going with her social welfare money. She had help from England too, she said. Yes, a Women's Institute had sent her that patchwork blanket over there. The worst thing about this barrack was that the washroom was so far off—away at the other end of the camp. Yes, the taps down there were the only ones in the camp. She had been in these rooms eight years now. It was too long. But she was glad for the children about this Norwegian summer holiday that had been arranged for them. Høst began

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to translate the letter and I wandered away alone to other parts of the camp.

A SMALL, DARK, YOUNGISH MAN, an Albanian, was standing in his doorway as if he had a world to survey. He lived in the little, dark room behind him into which he invited me. He was married, but he didn't live with his wife. She was no good. She slept with other men. I asked if he knew where his wife was now. Oh, yes: she had a room in the next hut.

There was another bed in the room which was much dirtier and dingier than any of Mrs. Kerekes'. In fact, there were no sheets on either bed—only limp, dark blankets. And wrapped up in them on this other bed was a fair-haired man of about the same age as the Albanian. There was something limp about him too. A small, rather strained smile was on his face. There was a broken tooth in the front of his mouth. I asked the Albanian if the man were ill. "Oh, no."

He said it as if no further explanation were required. I repeated the question to the man on the bed. But he simply went on smiling. The broken tooth made the smile seem shifty, and, as if the man had suddenly become aware of this himself, the smile faltered. He said nothing.

"He doesn't speak much German. He's a Ukrainian," said the Albanian.

I asked the man on the bed if he were all right. The smile came back again, but as a sort of shrug.

"Do you get enough to eat here?"

The broken-toothed shrug was repeated. It was as if he had understood the sense of the question, but not the point.

"He doesn't understand much about eating," said the Albanian. "He's not very interested in it."

I spoke directly to the Ukrainian again.

"Do you have any money?"

"Fifty."

He had answered at once, as if all the time he had been able to understand everything I was saying.

"Fifty marks?"

"A month."

The words just seemed able to trickle through the gap between the broken tooth and his slightly curled upper lip.

"You can't buy much with that," said the Albanian. His smile seemed quite a lively thing by contrast with the rest of what went on in that place.

Suddenly I realised two dreadful things. First, that there was in fact nothing wrong with the Ukrainian in these greasy blankets except that both his body and his mind were indistinguishably overwhelmed by the most terrible inertia. How many years already could he have lain there like that? How many more years would he lie there?

The second realisation was in a way even more dreadful. It was that the Albanian had no particularly companionable feelings about his companion in this dismal shed. He was showing him to me in the same sort of way in which he might have shown me where the roof leaked or where a rat had eaten away a floor-board.

As if to try and deny the reality to myself, I said to the man on the bed: "Would you like to emigrate?"

An answer came back: "Don't know."

Again a faltering checked the smile round the broken tooth. And yet it was just in this moment, when the whole ability of the man to move at all seemed to make a mockery of human personality, that I thought I saw in his eyes a perfectly normal, almost a sharp expression. It was as if there were some sort of signal there, a flicker of a suggestion that if only it could get some recognition it could use some help.

"It's all right," said Høst when I got outside again. "We'll be moving him to a mental home in a few days' time."

"Oh, good," I said weakly, but I knew quite well that this was not the sort of help the man had signalled for.

THE NEXT MAN to invite me in to his room was a strong, hearty-looking Yugoslav of forty-eight. Oh, yes, he was quite contented here. There were strips of linoleum on his floor and a clock on the wall. He switched on a radio. Also on the wall were the blue, white, and red horizontal bands of the old Royal flag of Yugoslavia, and beside it a picture of Mihailovic. Comfortable music surged from the radio, and a fatuous pair of voices, a young man's and a young woman's, crooned that all was well with the mid-morning world. The rain dripping through the trees outside made the music seem cosier still. This man had lost his wife; his four children were in a children's home. He could earn enough money to buy himself the things he wanted by working on building sites. Yes, all in all, he liked it here.

If you had met this man anywhere in the

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world you would have recognised in him a sensible, reliable fellow, sound still in wind and limb, a little individualistic, perhaps, but free of those tiresome neuroses which make a man rebel unduly against such environment as comes his way. The sort of man, in fact, who makes society what it is. And yet as I walked out again into the rain, into the faint smell of garbage and sanitation dampened by the breath of rotting wood, this man seemed in his way as ill as the inert Ukrainian.

Camp at Valka

THE MORNING TRAIN from Stuttgart was due in at Munich at seven-twenty. In the clean, clear light I stared from the train at the lush, undulating Bavarian countryside. We passed a signal-box with the word *Dachau* on it. A few hundred yards further on we passed through a trim, pink station with geraniums hanging from the roof in bowls.

We got into Munich about twenty minutes late. The Muslim voluntary agency's office wasn't far from the station. I ran along the pavement against the stream of secretaries and citizens with briefcases going to work. A self-effacing, ordinary-looking British tourist with a camera slung round his neck drifted into my path. It was Watson, the ex-salesman, now German representative of the British Adoption Committee for Displaced Persons.

"It's all right," he said. "We were going to give you another ten minutes."

He introduced me to a hatless, dark-haired, competent-looking man in thick horn-rimmed spectacles: Ahmed Balagiya, a Yugoslav, once a refugee himself and now head of the Muslim agency. Also to Mrs. Berghaus, a deeply sensible-looking, middle-aged social worker in thin-rimmed spectacles who was employed as "counsellor" for the agency. She was born in Russia, but had left in 1928 and had married a German. She had been working among refugees for some years now, and in her face tiredness and understanding had combined into a single fairly permanent expression.

We drove off. We had been racing down the Autobahn for some time when signposts to Nuremberg began to appear.

"We'll be seeing out-of-camp refugees mostly to-day," said Balagiya. "But there's one of my people I want to call on in the camp at Valka."

"What did you say?"

"Valka—near Nuremberg."

I had heard much of this notorious camp. For years it had been the main reception camp for all new refugees entering Germany. Conditions in it had been so bad that it had been constantly cited in Communist broadcast propaganda as an example of the terrible disillusionment that awaited refugees in the West. A nineteen-year-old Czech refugee named Frantik Suchy, who had been received there and had later returned to Czechoslovakia in disgust, had said over Radio Pilsen:

> I had to leave that awful camp at any price, for the conditions there kill within a man all his good qualities; you face hopelessness, misery, and despair with every step you take.[1]

Of Valka the Zellerbach Commission sponsored by the International Rescue Committee had written in 1958:

> Nobody defends Valka; nobody wants it; everyone agrees that it is an abomination.... But Valka still stands....In Bonn a high-ranking official concerned with refugees assured members of the Commission that the Government was determined to see Valka closed by the end of 1958. His categorical affirmation is something that will be welcomed by all those, both refugees and Agency representatives, who have experienced the horror of Valka at first hand. The Commission wonders, however, whether some way could not be found of accelerating the schedule of closure in the case of Valka. Every day that it continues to exist is an affront to the conscience of the German people and, indeed, of the free world.

THAT HAD BEEN WRITTEN IN 1958. In July, 1960, just before I left on my tour of Germany, I had received an official document from the German Federal Ministry for Refugees stating that there were now only 164 refugees in Valka and that it was in the process of closure. All the necessary functions of a refugee centre were being transferred to the newer camp at Zirndorf. On arrival in Bonn, I had asked a woman member of the High Commissioner's office if I could see Valka.

"Valka is now closed," she had said.

"Are you sure?"

"Oh yes, Valka is closed—thank goodness," she added piously.

And now here was Balagiya telling me that he was going to take me to see one of his refugees in Camp Valka.

"But the High Commissioner's office told me that Valka was closed!"

[1] Quoted by *Zellerbach Commission Report*, 1958, Section VI, p. 4.

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He shrugged his shoulders agreeably.

As soon as we left the Autobahn and began driving along ordinary roads again, the endless blocks of new apartment houses being built by the Germans on the outskirts of every town forced themselves on our attention. They were all trim, light, and soundly built, with gaily-coloured balconies.

"German refugees," said Mr. Balagiya regularly, over and over again.

Then quite suddenly I noticed that we were driving down the avenues of the spiritual wasteland that had been Camp Valka. It was a nondescript sort of area now, mainly open space, though there were a few familiar wooden huts among the fir trees on the outskirts. "German refugees," said Mr. Balagiya again, though with rather less feeling than before.

Mrs. Berghaus, the counsellor, was sitting up in the back of the car looking keenly through the windows.

"What a change," she said. "It is five years since I was here. I wouldn't have recognised it. All over there"—and she pointed to a stretch of open space—"all over there were wooden barracks. It was a foul place. It certainly looks nicer now."

Ahead of us appeared a line of barracks: long, low, bungalow-type stone barracks with trim little gardens full of beans and sunflowers and hollyhocks which gave the impression of having grown there regularly for many years. All seemed to be inhabited.

"What's this, then?" I asked Balagiya.

"What's left of Camp Valka."

He parked the car and we got out. We walked down a path between the barrack blocks and the sunflowers. Some middle-aged women in cotton dresses were sitting in one of the gardens. They took no notice of us. Balagiya stopped about half-way down the stone block and knocked at an open door. There was an invalid's wheel-chair parked outside it.

It was a second or two before I realised that Balagiya was talking to someone who was at the eye-level of a child, but who was not a child. I had a glimpse for a moment of the large, round head of a strong-looking man of about thirty-eight, and then it disappeared again. By the time the rest of us had reached the door Balagiya was alone there. "He'll be out in a minute," he said.

We were looking into a small, empty concrete hall with two doors leading off it. Out of one of these doors towards us now came the man whose head I had seen before. It was still at the eye-level of a child. Where his legs should have been were two thick leather pads, and he manœuvred himself quickly on the pads towards us. One of his daughters, a child of about eleven, came to the doorway with him. She towered over him.

He had three children altogether. He was a Yugoslav taken prisoner during the war, in which he had lost a leg. After the war he had decided that Tito's Yugoslavia was not the one he had been fighting for so he had turned himself into a refugee. His name was Mehmed Karamovic. He had been here in Valka for eight years now, that is to say through all the years of its existence as an "abomination." One day he had been knocked down in a motor accident in the camp and had lost his other leg. Recently his wife had run away, leaving him with the three children.

He combed his hair so that we could photograph him, and afterwards showed us the two rooms. They were much like any refugee rooms. By now I was finding it difficult not to view such rooms as if they were some stage set. The potted plants seemed like standard props. I realised how difficult it must be, if you worked in this refugee world, not to accept these standard sets after a while, so that the urgency wore off your feeling of awareness that something had to be done. This was where the danger lay. For in spite of all the theoretical talk I had heard about refugees wanting to stay in camps, the refugees themselves seemed to retain a magnificent urgency about their refusal to acquiesce.

MR. KARAMOVIC'S rooms were better than many others I had seen, in that at least they were soundly constructed of stone rather than of rotting wood. Here the roof was less likely to leak: here the sounds of everything that went on in the next room day and night were not, as in wooden barracks, part of one's own life. But here Mr. Karamovic was still a refugee in the place in which he had been a refugee for the past eight years. And as he looked up at Mr. Balagiya and asked if there were not some possibility of getting an apartment, the spirit of revolt in his face was very strong. Balagiya told me afterwards that Karamovic had said to him that he was at the end of his tether and was just beginning to drink.

"Note," said Balagiya. "Just beginning. After eight years of the worst refugee camp in Germany, just *beginning* to drink."

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Karamovic had admitted to him that during his momentary disappearance when we first arrived he had taken a nip to give himself the courage to face us.

I walked down the roadway counting the barracks on each side. Fifteen altogether seemed to be inhabited, not counting one with a police sign outside it. I walked into this hut and asked one of the policemen there how many refugees there were altogether in the barracks. He consulted a colleague.

"About 800 altogether I should think."

"How many of them are foreigners?"

"Oh, most of them are foreigners. But if you want full details, why don't you ask the High Commissioner's representative here?"

"There's a High Commissioner's representative *here*?"

He told me how to get to his office.

"Thanks very much."

"Valka is Closed"

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES was written on the door. Balagiya and I went in. A polite secretary said she would see if Mr. Terlin was free. Like all members of the High Commissioner's staff, Mr. Terlin, who was a very young Belgian, received us with a courtesy so immediate that it was as if it had arrived by sleight of hand. With these amiable people, it is not only as if nothing could be too much for them, but also as if their whole activity were dedicated to proving this.

"Good morning, sir," he said. "Now, what can I do for you?"

"Good morning," I said. "I wondered if you could tell me how many refugees you have here."

"Altogether there are just over 300, but I could find out the exact number at once."

He leant forward prepared to call for a secretary, treating even his desk with consideration.

"But the police here, whom I've just spoken to, say that there are more than 800."

His expression was that of very clean plate glass.

"Here in Zirndorf there are just over 300 people."

"Ah! No, I don't mean in Zirndorf. I mean here in Valka."

"Valka is closed."

Behind his back, framing his eager, polished face as he sat there, was a window. Through this window I could see a dismal stone barrack and Ukrainian and Polish women moving desultorily about their gardens.

"I beg your pardon?" I said.

"Valka is closed."

"But I can see refugees walking about there just outside the window."

"Valka is closed!" This time his voice rose to a slightly hysterical note.

"Well who are those people, then?"

"The only refugee-reception centre is now at Zirndorf a few kilometres from here. There is no longer any Camp Valka."

I tried to speak very calmly and slowly:

"Do you think you could please tell me how many people of the sort that I can see at this moment outside your window there are living in those stone buildings?"

"Ah, I see!" He made it sound as if I had been stupid and he was covering up for me. "Of course." And this time he rang for his secretary. She was back in a minute or two with the figures; and he read them out like winning numbers in a lottery.

"The total number of people in these stone settlements is 900. Of these 860 are foreign refugees. Of these 80 per cent, or about 730, are 'homeless foreigners,' or what used to be called 'D.P.s.'" There was a pause. "Furthermore, I can tell you if you wish"—it was as if he were on to the consolation prizes now—"286 of these are children between the ages of six and fourteen; 150 are children between the ages of one and six."

"But these people are not in Camp Valka?"

He looked puzzled, though still considerate.

"But I told you: Valka is..."

"Yes; I know. Thank you very much."

It was impossible to get angry with such a polite man.

Two Refugees

EUGENE DANCHENKO is a Russian of twenty-two. Until 18th October, 1959, he had been a Soviet border guard, stationed near Berlin. On that date he had crossed over to the freedom of the West. When I saw him, he was living in a special temporary settlement of the Tolstoy Foundation just outside Munich.

He was a solid, chunky young man with an intelligent, extrovert face. He would have made a good Rugby football forward or, later in life perhaps, an effective American politician.

Immediately after crossing the border, he had been taken to Düsseldorf, where he was

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screened by the British military authorities for two months. He had no complaints about that. He saw that it was a necessary measure, and he had been well treated by the British. But after that he had been taken to Camp Valka.

Valka was then not even closed in the High Commissioner's eyes, but was functioning as an official reception camp for incoming refugees. This was in December, 1959, and Danchenko had stayed there until February, 1960, two years after the Zellerbach Commission had described the camp as an "abomination" and had recommended that in the interests of the West it should be closed as soon as possible.

"It was a terrible place to arrive at," he said. "I tell you I said to myself: 'What have you done, you fool!' I bitterly regretted ever having become a refugee. For in the Soviet Union the conditions at the worst"—and he repeated "at the *worst*, were better than at Valka...."

One day he had been beaten up by the police there. It was a typical incident in the camp's regular pattern of disorder and gangsterism and squalor. "...I was walking home one night back from Nuremberg to the camp, when I was stopped by some police in a car on the road just near the camp. They asked me for my papers, and when I produced them and they saw I was a Russian, they just beat me. It was typical of the everyday atmosphere of the place...."

The Tolstoy Foundation had rescued him and brought him to Munich, where he now had a job with the radio.

"Now that I've been here six months, I'm quite impressed by the West. And, of course, I am very glad now I came. But, apart from what happened to me at the beginning, it is very terrible being kept waiting around so long, as I am now. Oh, I know I have a good job and this place here is very nice, but I want to get on with my life. Why must the emigration be so slow? I tell you, for people who have torn up all their roots this uncertainty is very terrible. Because for you it may just be slowness, but for us it is uncertainty all the time...."

He wanted to go to America, and he probably would be accepted in the end, but as the U.S. law stood at present it looked as if he would have to wait a year and a half. In the meantime he was writing his life-story and he had met a Czech girl refugee he wanted to marry. All in all, he was probably quite happy. And yet there was a restless look about him, a flicker of anxiety about the eyes which didn't fit at all with the sturdy frame of the Rugby football forward—a progressively undermining symptom of the "uncertainty" of which he had spoken.

THE CHARMING MIDDLE-AGED SWEDISH lady who runs the International Rescue Committee in Munich had a story of Valka too.

A Czech border guard—a Czech equivalent of Danchenko—on patrol one day had shot a refugee who was trying to escape from Czechoslovakia into Germany. When the guard had come up to the body of the man and had seen him lying at his feet, he had been suddenly overcome with traumatic horror at what he had done. He had immediately thrown away his rifle and come across the border himself. He had been put in Camp Valka.

But the traumatic shock had endured. The man became temporarily deranged. Though derangement resulting from sudden mental shock can be relatively easily dealt with by immediate psychiatric treatment, the man had been allowed to wander around Camp Valka for three years without any medical treatment at all. At the end of that time his condition had deteriorated to such an extent that he was probably incurable.

Fugitives from Tito

FOR SOME YEARS *now about 400 Yugoslav refugees a month have been escaping into Austria. The great majority of these are young single men following a historic pattern of economic migration. Tito's Communism has tried to put a stop to this. The U.N. High Commissioner's mandate expressly excludes "economic refugees." On the other hand, some people argue that this mandate requires "fear of persecution" in a refugee and that it is persecution to try and prevent a man from seeking his future where he wants to seek it and where family traditions demand he seeks it. Until November, 1959, between 50 per cent and 75 per cent of all new incoming refugees were expelled back to Yugoslavia. Now a complicated legal formula has been found by which the Austrian Government enables economic refugees to emigrate and only about 10 per cent of refugees are returned to Yugoslavia. The camp in which incoming refugees from Yugoslavia are now held by the Austrian Government is Traiskirchen near Vienna. Expulsions take place only near the border. Once at Traiskirchen*

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any Yugoslav refugee whether economic or political can be sure that he will not be expelled.

TRAISKIRCHEN CAMP had been a military academy in the days of Hitler, and after the war a barracks for Russian occupation troops. Basically, therefore, it was a solid, roomy, and Spartanly healthy sort of establishment, and it had been thoroughly cleaned and redecorated after the Russians had left. From the outside, with its parade ground and flagpole and properly laid-out three-storey buildings, it looked a reasonable enough place to be a reception camp for refugees.

A man met us at the gate. He looked a little like a *Feldwebel* in the *Luftwaffe* I had known. He said:

"*Ich bin der* Camp Leader *von dem* Free Camp."

Was there then a camp here that was not free?

He gave me the sort of look I might have expected from a Feldwebel. Of course not. Everyone was free here.

What then, I asked, had he meant by "the free camp"? It seemed to presuppose another camp that was not free.

After a brief inner struggle, he seemed to remember that he was not a *Feldwebel*.

Look, he said. What he had meant was this: He was the camp leader of the first two floors of these buildings. Up on the third floor was the processing or screening stage, through which all new refugees must pass on arrival. That was nothing to do with him at all. That was under the control of the police. There were 156 people up there at the moment. Yes; they were locked in. They stayed there perhaps a week on the average or perhaps a little longer. There were about 1,000 people in the camp altogether. Now was I satisfied?

We walked into a large hall, where behind a sort of pen, like a sheep-dip, were about thirty men, women, and children. All had about them the quite different hard, brown look of people who have recently spent a lot of time in the open air. Some of the women had handkerchiefs tied round their heads; one wore a long green skirt and gold earrings. She had two little boys with her, about eleven years old. Most of the men were in their very early twenties and wore suits with open-necked shirts. All had come across the border from Yugoslavia within the last day or so. They looked grateful to be allowed just to sit there while clerks took particulars and issued them with knife, fork, spoon, bowl, and blanket.

"They will be quite glad of the rest up on the third floor," said the camp leader with paternal sincerity.

We moved up to the first floor to see how those who had had their rest were getting on. Most of them seemed still to be resting in the big rooms divided by cardboard partitions that rose no more than about half the height of the ceiling. In one of these, three boys, all wearing suits that were now rather crumpled, rose politely from their beds. They were all nineteen years old. They seemed quite pleased to answer questions. It was like being an officer going around barracks and asking if there were any complaints.

"Oh, no; it is much better here than in Yugoslavia...."

"Except that it is rather dirty here...."

"And we would very much like to work...."

"We have nothing to do but hang about all day...."

"Though here, of course, there is much more chance of getting work than in Yugoslavia...."

I asked a fair-haired boy why he had come.

"Economic refugee," he answered pat, with a certain serious pride, like a schoolboy who is learning a new subject. "I was working in a quarry, but there was so little money...."

Another, with a round, brown face and dark hair said even more proudly:

"Political refugee. I had to join the Communist Youth.'

"But why didn't the other one have to?" I said, nodding towards the fair boy.

"He probably would have had to, some time."

In another room, smaller but unpartitioned and thus complete in itself, I found a mother with three small children. Yes, she said, it was all right here, but why did they have to wait so long? They wanted to emigrate to Australia. Her husband had been here nine months already. Yes; she had left Yugoslavia later. (Here another woman, who was with her, put in: "She carried her children over the frontier." The mother smiled modestly.)

I asked what they had done about trying to get to Australia. She said they had announced their wish to go. They were told that their wish would be put before the Australian Commission and they just had to wait. They were waiting. But, of course, waiting here was better than Yugoslavia.

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THE "CAMP LEADER" had been carefully unobtrusive throughout these interviews, as if our skirmish over the definition of freedom at Traiskirchen had made him decide to play his hand differently. Most probably he didn't think of himself as having a hand to play at all. Anyway, he now seemed to judge the moment ripe for a word on behalf of the authorities.

I mustn't think, he said, that everyone had to wait here a very long time. Only in exceptional cases did people have to stay here as long as six months. Between one and four months was the average. Perhaps I would like to see the Austrian who was in charge of the documentation here? He would be able to give me an exact picture of the emigration situation.

The man in charge of documentation was a tired, sincere man, unusual in his profession inasmuch as he was obviously more interested in human beings than in paper. Yes, he said; it was all terribly slow. It was a pity that World Refugee Year was now coming to an end and everything was still moving so slowly. Now take these Yugoslavs—it was only Canada and Australia that seemed interested, and even so, things were moving much more slowly than they need. It would help, of course, if the migration commissions could come here directly and work on the spot. At the moment the refugee had to go to the Commission and, of course, that meant that if he were at work he would lose his pay. This was the sort of thing that slowed things up.

I asked if the voluntary agencies who were the refugees' link with the migration machinery had offices here.

"No; but each voluntary agency usually visits Traiskirchen once a week. They come on different days."

"Wouldn't things move faster if the voluntary agencies had permanent offices here?"

"Oh, undoubtedly. At present, of course, there are two permanent representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner here every day, but they are not directly concerned with the migration machinery. They are establishing whether or not the refugees are political or economic refugees and generally safeguarding their status."

"You said that only Australia and Canada were interested in taking Yugoslavs. Do you think if England were prepared to take them, any would want to go?"

"Unfortunately the English have no programme for these people. Most of the refugees want to go to Australia or Canada, but certainly some would want to go to England if they could—say as many as 10 per cent. After all, the most important thing for refugees is to begin their new life as soon as possible. It is the gap in between the two lives that is the painful experience."

COMPARED WITH THE OLD REFUGEES, for whom the gap had lasted sometimes fifteen years, I realised that these new-style refugees at Traiskirchen were receiving princely treatment. And yet, with the memory of that fifteen-year fiasco in mind, it seemed a terrible thing that, if the delay were in fact avoidable, these young people should continue as "refugees," in the painful sense of that word, even a day longer than necessary. Four months could seem a very long period of uncertainty to a boy of nineteen who had no family to communicate with, and who was deprived of all the moral support of the surroundings in which he had learnt to live.

(Later, in Salzburg, I was to have an interview with a deeply disturbed official of the International Committee for European Migration. "All I can tell you," he said, "is that there are 1,000 refugees hanging around for months in Traiskirchen, and yet I cannot fill my ships.... We at I.C.E.M. are not getting the people for movement.")

We went into one of the large "family rooms," divided up into cubicles by flimsy partitions reaching about half-way up to the ceiling. Here there was even less privacy than existed in the old barrack-type refugee camps, where at least families had whole walls to themselves, however thin. This laterally bisected warren must have been a strange place for young people to sleep in at nights.

But the chief complaint of the mother of four children whom I found there making clothes on a sewing machine was the delay itself rather than the conditions in which it was experienced.

"I have a brother in Canada, but it doesn't seem to help. Three months ago I gave in our names to go to Canada, but we have heard nothing. Yes; here we have enough to eat. But we do not have enough clothes. I make what I can for the children, but it is hard. No, we are given no clothes here, and small children need clothes."

She bent over the sewing machine again industriously but with a certain gaiety. Talking to these Yugoslavs was a quite different experi-

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ence from talking to the old refugees in the camps. With the people who had been in camps for fifteen years or so, one was awkwardly aware that they were in some way "different." One felt cramped, in spite of a determination not to be, by the feeling that they deserved special consideration. Here no such frightening, invisible barrier had yet had time to erect itself. These refugees of a few months were still just part of a non-refugee world. For them the label "refugee" had not yet acquired the sinister ring of the leper's bell.

"Something Happens to Them"

HALF-WAY *between Linz and Salzburg is the fine refugee sanatorium of Thalham. It holds 106 specially bad cases; is under the administration of the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and has been partly equipped by funds from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.*

The patients seemed to be sitting about the bright, spacious rooms or patrolling the long, polished corridors as if they could still hardly believe that all this was just for them. One or two even jumped exaggeratedly to attention to say good-afternoon to the doctor as we passed. One man followed us for a while, chuckling to himself, and at one glass doorway the doctor, after peering in over our shoulders, hurriedly turned us away, saying philosophically: "I shall just have to hope that that woman at the table didn't see you. It will mean a terrible time for me; she'll think I've brought the police to spy on her."

He explained how most of the mental patients in the sanatorium were refugees who had suffered at the hands of the political police in the countries from which they had escaped.

"Their internal sense of persecution has followed them here, so that they live in a continuous state of terror and anxiety. They are unable to grasp that the police have not followed them here. They complain to me. Yes, I hope that woman didn't see you."

He told us of another woman, a Hungarian in her forties, who had been arrested before the Hungarian rising of 1956. After a time in prison, during which she was interrogated about a resistance group to which her father was alleged to belong and of which she knew nothing, she was told one morning that she was going to be taken to see her father hanged. She still had nothing to tell. She was taken to a courtyard, where from a distance she saw a man hanged by the particularly brutal Hungarian method of garrotting on a post. A few days later she was told that the man whom she had seen hanged was not in fact her father, but that her father would be hanged if she didn't reveal what she knew about the resistance group. She knew nothing. Again she was taken to the courtyard and witnessed the hanging of a man she believed to be her father. But again the final torture was in reserve for her. Some time later she was taken to a room where an elderly man who had been stripped stark naked was being flogged round the room on all fours. A heavy stone had been suspended from his testicles. It was her father. He implored her to tell all she knew, but—and this possibly was the worst torture of all—she knew nothing. Shortly afterwards she had gone out of her mind. And although she had been rescued from prison after the 1956 rising she was still out of her mind in Thalham Sanatorium.

"They tell me endlessly, endlessly of such things. It is their only hope of recovery."

WE CROSSED A QUIET PLOT OF GRASS to the tuberculosis centre, followed by curious eyes from the windows of the rooms we had just visited. As the doctor told us of his cases it became clear that there was another disease besides tuberculosis from which his patients were suffering: the indifference of the civilised world. He let us have clinical details.

A tubercular Yugoslav woman who had responded to the treatment in the sanatorium had now been negative for four years. All this time she had been trying without success to emigrate to the United States.

"While such people are sick, there is a nominal conscience about them. This fine sanatorium is built to look after them. But when it achieves its object and cures them, the world has no use for them. This is inhuman—*unmenschlich*."

We looked into a ward in which two young Albanians and two young Yugoslavs were waiting patiently for their cure.

"But what is to happen to them when their wait is over?" asked the doctor. "Tuberculosis is a curable disease now. But sometimes, with refugees, it seems as if the world finds the consequences of this great achievement disagreeable."

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WE WALKED into his consulting-room, and he rang a bell for the Matron.

"I would like you to talk to a young man whom we have cured here," he said to us.

He came in a few minutes later, a young Hungarian of twenty, rather short, with an almost gangling, resentful gait. He had fine dark hair, brushed back, and an intelligent, sensitive, but angry young face. He had escaped from Hungary alone, a little after the Rising, on 27th December, 1956. His name was Alexander Sirtes. He had been admitted to the sanatorium suffering from tuberculosis in February, 1958, and had been cured in September, 1959. Ever since then he had been hanging about the sanatorium, vainly hoping to emigrate to the United States and growing more and more bitter every month. He had an aunt and a cousin already in the United States, but that had been no help to him.

"Have I got to hang around here until I become mentally ill to justify my existence?" he asked me angrily. I was the representative of the outside world, and he was wasting no time in letting me know what he thought of it.

I could see that already an unnatural, obsessional sense of persecution was present in his mind. Perhaps he could see this too, and it was this that gave added ferocity, bordering on frenzy, to his remark.

"But Sweden will take people with a T.B. history," I said to him. "Couldn't you go there instead?"

"I only want to go to America," he said curtly. To him it was now an insult to suggest that he might have to compromise on the country of his choice. "If I can't go there, I'll stay in Austria."

I asked what profession he wanted to take up.

"Radio technician," he answered, also curtly, as if I might be going to ask him to compromise on that too.

Once, he said, he'd been to Salzburg to be examined by a medical commission. He had sat about there all day and had come away fairly certain that "they" hadn't even looked at his lung photograph.

"Well," I said feebly, "if you're determined it must be the United States, you must go on hoping. I'm sure you'll succeed in the end. You mustn't lose hope."

So far he had grimly managed to control his anger. Now he gave up.

"Hope?" he spat out contemptuously. I could see the strain in the tendons of his neck. "Hope! Hope! People always say to me I must hope. But what can hope mean after months and months of this?"

I saw that he was near to tears. For the first time I remembered that he was hardly more than a boy.

As we walked back towards our car the doctor said:

"It is of the utmost importance that there should be an absence of psychological upset in recovery from T.B. cases. Five times at least in the last nine months I have met that boy terribly depressed—so that I am beginning to worry about him. People are not objects which one can just leave lying about. You can leave things lying about, but not people. Something happens to them."

He still spoke in the same quiet voice in which he had recounted the horrors of the Hungarian secret police.

"This must all be seen from the point of view of human dignity," he went on. "And although I am an Austrian myself I must say that the greater nations have something very simple to learn from Austria. Does Austria set up commissions on the frontiers to ask if these people have tuberculosis or any other 'disqualification' when they come in?" He paused, a small, white figure with the wind mildly stirring the thin hair above his little spectacles. "Here at the end of World Refugee Year these regulations disqualify people as human beings. This must not be. We must not tolerate the concept of the mass where people are concerned. The ninety-year-old grandmother who is completely off her head—and we have such people here—is someone whom we must treat as if she were our own, a most treasured person. *Es handelt sich um jeden einzelnen Mensch.* It's a matter of every single individual human being."

He made it sound like a battle cry.

Postscript

WORLD REFUGEE YEAR itself was a fine attempt to draw attention to a world situation which had been shamefully neglected. How much of a success has it been?

Perhaps its most important objective was simply to bring about an increased awareness of what needed to be done. In this it has undoubtedly been a success. But how lasting is this increased awareness going to be?

In practical terms, World Refugee Year has

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successes to record. But it must also be recorded that they are limited. And perhaps now it is of more value to stress the limitations than the success.

The total additional amount of money contributed for refugees in World Refugee Year was about £30,000,000. One quarter of this was subscribed by the British people. These sums were, of course, collected for all refugees all over the world: not only for the estimated 110,000 unsettled "mandate" refugees in Europe but also for the 250,000 (mostly women and children) in Tunisia and Morocco, for the 1,120,000 in Palestine (half of whom are under fifteen), for 2,500,000 in Pakistan, 4,000,000 in Korea and 1,000,000 in Hong Kong.[2]

In what other ways has the world's new awareness and sense of responsibility for the refugees shown itself? In Europe the greatest cause for congratulation has been the partial relaxation by some governments of their rigid immigration laws. But an examination in detail of the progress achieved serves rather to highlight the shamefulness of the past than the generosity of the present. Between 1952 and 1959 only 4,665 "handicapped" refugees abroad were resettled, and 2,826 of these were taken by Sweden.[3] Thus it is now cause for congratulation when, as happened in World Refugee Year, the United Kingdom produces a scheme for the admission of 1,000 sponsored refugees and 210 suffering from disabilities like tuberculosis; or Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, and the United States other similar special schemes for limited numbers.

But together with the British people's justifiable self-congratulation on their achievement should go the reminder that from 1952 to 1958 only sixty-four "handicapped" refugees resettled by the U.N. High Commissioner were admitted to the United Kingdom and those all in 1956, the year of the Hungarian rising.

All in all, the dismal fact remains that, in a special World Refugee Year called after nine years of neglect, the "have" countries of the United Nations were unable to share out between them, without criteria or qualifications of any sort, the relatively few remaining handicapped and unhandicapped refugees in Europe who wished to be resettled.

There have been other practical successes of a sort in World Refugee Year. The Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees set itself as No. 1 target for World Refugee Year camp clearance in Europe. If you can regard as "camp clearance" the drawing up of the *plans* for camp clearance and the securing of funds to implement those plans then the target was achieved. Little true clearance was achieved. There were thousands of refugees in camps in Austria and Germany alone for whom World Refugee Year made no difference at all. During the year the "mandate" camp population in Europe actually fell by *less* than it had fallen in the previous six months—from 23,520 to 17,330, compared with from 32,000 to 23,520.[4] The Director of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, who gives these figures, has cold comfort too for the out-of-camp refugees. "$6,570,000 was earmarked," he writes, "to make a start during 1960 towards finding permanent solutions for the out-of-camp refugees, priority being given to handicapped refugees. Unfortunately, in this field, it was possible to raise only less than half the sum."

Of course, no refugee problem can, in the end, be separated from the larger problem of the world's poverty, hunger, and misery as a whole. A terrifying illustration of this is found in the fact that in many parts of the world the distribution of temporary relief to refugees causes a new social problem of its own. Refugees who have been given what the Western world considers the indispensable basic minimum necessary for the dignity and survival of a human being become privileged persons among the local population. This applies not only to India, Pakistan, Korea, and Palestine, but also to parts of Greece and Italy as well.

And in one sense it is true that the refugee is a privileged person. He is privileged inasmuch as political events have drawn the world's attention to his misery rather more than to the misery of millions of other human beings which is forgotten about or just taken for granted.

[2] There are also an estimated 2,500,000 Hindu and Sikh refugees in India, but the Government of India does not recognise them as having any special refugee status, regarding them merely as Indian citizens.

[3] The rest had gone mainly to Belgium, France, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, and Holland.

[4] November–December issue of *Migration News*, published by the International Catholic Migration Commission in Geneva, p. 9.

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Brian Crozier

Six Africans

in Search of a Personality

GAMAL ABDEL NASSER shakes hands with his arm fully extended, and his grip crushes. He looks over the visitor's left shoulder towards an invisible but applauding crowd, and the white smile that curls on his lips is directed towards it. Léopold Sédar Senghor's grip is less remarkable than his glance: from behind the glass screening his eyes comes a message of philosophical benevolence, of innocence of imputed crimes. He suggests that his visitor should sit facing him across the desk so that note-taking will be made easy; he values the words of which he is a master, and wishes to ensure their preservation. Habib Bourguiba's greeting combines warmth and drama; the frenzy of his eyes is like that of Shakespeare's poet; his hands add a dimension to his oratory. He, too, has an unseen audience, multiplying the solitary presence of his visitor. Sékou Touré's grip is athletic where Nasser's is herculean; his eye is hard with the toughness of the political in-fighter. But the smile that dissolves the hardness carries the unexpected warmth of discovery: the discovery of brotherhood. Modibo Keita's handshake is singular: too flaccid for his gigantic stature. Unlike the others, the words flow only when he is needled; but the final impression is pleasing and lingers after departure. It is an impression of grave simplicity and dignity. I ought, perhaps, to add Ferhat Abbas to this list. But his handshake is not among those I remember: it is an acquired characteristic—the perfunctory handshake of a Frenchman. What I do remember is a man, a man earnest and sincere, talking sincerely and earnestly about religion, and rather little about politics.

Six Africans, six personalities. (Or, as the English-language translation of Nasser's little book puts it, misquoting Pirandello: "Six personalities in search of actors.") The role in which they cast themselves—all, including the most unlikely—is African. The personality into which each of these powerful, distinct, diverse personalities seeks to merge himself is the African Personality. It will not do to proclaim that there is no such thing without examining the evidence.

There is *my* evidence and *theirs*: what they told me and what they say in public or write for publication. When I first met Nasser of Egypt, Bourguiba of Tunisia, and Abbas of Algeria, I was not in search of the African personality; nor, indeed, would it have occurred to me to search for it in those quarters. By the time I met Senghor of Senegal, Keita of Mali (which used to be Soudan), and Touré of Guinea, no quest could have interested me more, but the immediacy of events ruled out a discussion of fundamentals (except with Senghor, who, naturally, imposed them on me; though not, I should add, against my will). *My* evidence, then, concerns the mechanism of character, the semi-private processes of thought; I shall turn to *their* evidence for the public projection of what they conceive as the African personality.

It may be objected that there is no difference between the two—"my" evidence and "theirs" —in that heads of state, when they talk to journalists, expect publication and choose their words accordingly. If this is the rule, however, these were exceptions: our conversations were private and not intended for publication. It was always made clear, on the other hand, that the rule of privacy applied specifically to certain

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facts about events that were current at the time each interview took place. I shall therefore act as my self-appointed censor, breaking the rule of privacy only when the events under discussion have ceased to matter, and selecting remarks that throw light on character and thought without breaching confidence.

THE CENSOR in me allows me more liberty with President Nasser than with the other Presidents, if only because my talk with him took place so long ago: on 22nd May, 1956—the year of the Suez crisis, certainly, but two months before the Canal was nationalised. Egypt recognised the People's Republic of China during my stay, and the reasons he gave for this switch from the Nationalist régime in Formosa reveal more about his methods and mentality than any other observations. I had asked him whether his government had recognised Peking in response to pressure—for instance, a threat to make trade conditional upon recognition. This, said Nasser, was not so, and the rest of his answer was infinitely devious. On the contrary, he explained, recognition of Peking was an answer to "Eden's attempt to get Russia to agree to U.N. manœuvres to limit arms in the Middle East." Did that mean that he expected to get arms from China? "It's an alternative source of supply," he remarked,[1] and explained: "China is not a member of the United Nations." His reasoning was clear enough when unravelled: the Chinese Communists, not being members of the U.N., were not bound by U.N. resolutions on Israel, to which Russia, at that time, was becoming a party; if, as a result of such resolutions, Russia no longer felt able to supply arms to Egypt by direct means, it could start sending them through China. President Nasser added: "I don't like the Security Council. I don't like the United Nations. I don't like the Tripartite Declaration."[2]

I asked Nasser what the *"Voice of the Arabs"* meant when it talked about the "unity of the Arab world from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf," and whether he had chosen Mussolini or Kemal Ataturk as a model for his career. In other words, I asked, was he likely to turn outwards and indulge in external adventures that would bring him no profit, or to look inwards instead, and concentrate on putting his own house in order.

For the first time, Gamal Abdel Nasser's face hardened and his voice—a rather light, high voice—acquired an edge of oratory. "We Arabs," he exclaimed, "are one nation, with one Arabic language and one Islamic religion. What is happening in Algeria is of much greater interest to us in Cairo than to the French in Paris." Mussolini? Ataturk? "I do not sit down every morning and work out whether I am going to follow in the footsteps of Mussolini or Ataturk. If you mean to say I am going to impose another form of colonialism—an Egyptian colonialism—on this area, you are mistaken. The Egyptians would never do that, and the other Arab countries wouldn't tolerate it if they did." External adventures? House in order? "I don't made a distinction between internal and external affairs. At first, after the Revolution, I was mainly concerned with internal reforms. Later, Britain's policy and Israel's Gaza attack [February 28, 1955] forced me to concentrate on external affairs. It was essential for our army to be much stronger than Israel's, so that Israel would not be tempted to attack. We will never attack first. Once we are strong and secure, I shall get back to internal reforms."

President Nasser is not, I think, a great man in the sense that General de Gaulle, Churchill, or Stalin are great men. But he is one of the biggest men in Africa, probably the biggest in prestige, certainly the biggest in influence. He is the least educated, and therefore the least intellectual, of "my" African personalities. His ideas are big, simple, naïve, vulnerable; but powerful in impact and appeal. What he lacks in the faculty of abstract reasoning he compensates for in tactical cunning that serves his interests. His Arab-ness and obsession with Israel are well known, his African-ness rather less. One turns to *The Philosophy of the Revolution* for guidance, as once one turned to *Mein Kampf*, and, happily, it is easier reading.

In his concluding pages, Nasser analysed the "circles" in which the Egyptians must revolve if they were to play their destined part in the world. He found three: the Arab circle,

[1] He spoke in English. It was not a tête-à-tête: Tom Little of the Arab News Agency and Hassanein Haycal of *El Akhbar*, Nasser's confidant, were there, too, but did not intervene in the conversation.

[2] Of May, 1950, under which Britain, France, and the United States agreed to keep a balance between the armaments of Israel on the one hand and the Arab states on the other.

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"the circle of the continent of Africa," and the circle of Islam. The second is our concern. On this second circle, Nasser writes:

> ... we cannot, in any way, stand aside, even if we wish to, away from the sanguinary and dreadful struggle now raging in the heart of Africa between five million whites and two hundred million Africans. ... The people of Africa will continue to look up to us, who guard the northern gate of the continent and who are its connecting link with the world outside. We cannot, under any condition, relinquish our responsibility in helping, in every way possible, in diffusing the light and civilisation into the farthest parts of that virgin jungle.

It is illuminating to re-read these lines in 1961, at a time when that other African, President Kasavubu, from his virgin jungle in the Congo, complains of United Arab Republic interference in his country's affairs. The clues are vital: neutralist in the cold war, Nasser is committed in the African struggle; the assumption that the people of Africa look to Cairo for leadership is explicitly stated; and, like France, Nasser, implicitly on behalf of Egypt, the Arab world, and Islam, assumes a *mission civilisatrice*.

IT MAY BE MORE illuminating still to see how far other African leaders endorse Nasser's assumptions or offer alternative ones, to what extent they accept or contest his leadership. He is not alone, certainly, in seeing the struggle for Africa as indivisible, from Algeria to Kenya to the Congo to South Africa, and as one from which no African can stand aside. Didn't Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana write on the last page of his *Autobiography*:

> The African in every territory of this vast continent has been awakened and the struggle for freedom will go on. It is our duty as the vanguard force to offer what assistance we can to those now engaged in the battles that we ourselves have fought and won. Our task is not done and our own safety is not assured until the last vestiges of colonialism have been swept from Africa.

Here, then, is a restatement of the right of Africans to intervene anywhere in Africa; Nasser calls it a "responsibility" and Nkrumah a "duty." Are we drawing nearer the African personality? A little, I think, but the evidence is not yet conclusive. United in supporting the proposition that Africans ought to intervene in battles against colonialism outside their own countries' boundaries, Nasser and Nkrumah are disunited on the leadership of the struggle as a whole, for each implicitly assumes that leadership for himself in the passages I have quoted.

SÉKOU TOURÉ'S ASSERTION of leadership is less overt, both in private and in public, but the force of his personality, his physical energy, and his intellectual dynamism are such that it is hard to see him falling into line behind another leader. More than any other African leader, not excepting Nkrumah and probably not even excepting Nasser, Sékou Touré is a symbol of African independence. Like Fidel Castro in Latin America, Sékou Touré chose to reach "independence" not by negotiation but by rupture and verbal violence. Since we are in the realm of myth, we need not labour the comparison. Sékou Touré's myth was born that day in September, 1958, when he said *"No"* to General de Gaulle's Constitution and was cut off without a penny. That is his myth and he is proud of it: "Our party has been able, better than the other brotherly parties of Senegal, Soudan, Niger, etc., to succeed in leading our country to independence," he told the *Parti Démocratique de Guinée* on 14th September, 1959,[3] in a massive report that contributes further elements to a definition of the African personality.

The sense of past humiliation (and, by implication, the desire to find a new dignity):

> We have known brutal and insolent colonisation, the kind that took us not for men but for inferior beings, that colonisation which used force and abused it.

The implicit right of intervention elsewhere in Africa (at this point Touré rejoins Nasser and Nkrumah):

> We are conscious that, so long as the whole of Africa is not liberated, Guinea will feel itself threatened. It is exactly as if one took the image of a man with a wound in the finger: the finger itself does not feel the pain, if there is pain, but it is the entire body of that man which registers it. Guinea registers the pain of the colonised peoples of Africa.

The fire of Sékou Touré's anger, the acid of his anti-French bitterness, sear the air between him and an inquiring visitor. Like the Com-

[3] *La Lutte du Parti Démocratique de Guinée pour l'Emancipation Africaine*. By Sékou Touré. (Conakry, 1959.)

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munists, to whom he owes so much, he makes a distinction between official France and the French people. No money, no food, no archives, no trade: these were the predictable consequences of his *"No"* to official France, the price —willingly paid—of independence as he conceived it. But the French people—*i.e.*, Frenchmen and women resident in Guinea—were not to suffer for the sins of official France. Nor did they, for not one of them was molested or humiliated. President Touré told me this with pride, and it is a fact, easily checked.[4]

FOR THE REST, is he, as so many Western commentators have hastily assumed, as near a Communist as makes no difference, or, at the very least, a willing tool of the Communist powers? A Communist he undeniably is, of course, but in a very special, a very African sense, not because, as a trade union leader, he was trained by the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (all African nationalists, or nearly all, from Senghor to Nkrumah to Jomo Kenyatta, have accepted aid from the Communists, often because aid was not forthcoming from any other source), not because Marxist terminology and thought-processes have permeated his thinking and its expression, but because Marxism has contracted an emotional and intellectual marriage within him to a dimly felt awareness of African communal traditions; because, also, Marxism, as *he is modifying it*, is a powerful instrument of government by participation, as distinct from government by delegation through the ballot box.

Participation is, indeed, the dominant element in Sékou Touré's modified Marxism; and the fact that there has been, especially in his own mind, a modification, is, I think, far more important than the superficial similarity between Guinea and a Communist state. That Sékou Touré feels himself distinct from the Communists is beyond question; it is confirmed both by the public and the private evidence.

In public, Sékou Touré has denounced the pretension of the Soviet bloc to speak in the name of Africa,[5] and, more explicitly, rejected Communism in these terms:

> I refuse to allow the P.D.G. (*Parti Démocratique de Guinée*) to follow the ideological line of Communism. If certain people wish to do so, let them found a Guinean Communist Party, but they must realise that the P.D.G. will oppose them under my leadership. Communism is not the way for Africa. The class struggle here is impossible, for there are no classes, but only social strata. The fundamental basis of our society is the family and the village community.[6]

In private, he emphasises Guinea's distinctness, asserts the superiority of its system over others, declares its aspiration to escape from excessive economic dependence on Communist aid and trade, and refuses to take established Communist states as a model for Guinea. My notebook adds flesh to these bones.

Guinea's distinctness and superiority:

> We have the most advanced democracy in the world. I challenge you to name a more advanced one. Whereas in countries like the United States *and the Soviet Union* [my italics] the ruling party is only a small fraction of the population, here in Guinea, it is everywhere.

The will to escape from dependence on the Soviet bloc (in response to a question whether Guinea intended to establish a greater balance in its neutrality by forging new links with the West):

> The question is badly phrased. *We* ought to be asking the West what it intends to do to enable Guinea to establish a better balance. It is not through our will that we depend on the Soviet bloc. Our shop is open: we have coffee, bananas, bauxite. We were in the Western circuit. We wanted to keep in the circuit, but our money was blocked.

Guinea's unwillingness to model itself on a Communist country (I had asked him whether his country intended to take China as an example since Guinea's system of government appeared to be similar, in some respects to China's):

> Why should we? I have just been over China. It is a very different country from ours. I found nothing in China's experience that could interest us.

In his assertion of the uniqueness of Guinea's experiment, of its African-ness, Sékou Touré finds himself in ideological comradeship not only with Nkrumah, his partner in the Ghana-Guinea "union," but also with men on the other side of the intangible fence that divides "militants" from "moderates" in Africa: Léopold Senghor, for instance. Divided, a Sékou Touré or a Modibo Keita certainly is

[4] Though forty French residents were expelled, at short notice, from Guinea, on February 3, 1961.
[5] Speech before the United Nations General Assembly, last September.
[6] *Le Monde*, April 4, 1960.

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from a Senghor or an Houphouët-Boigny, on the path to independence and the definition of the goal once it is reached, on relations with the former colonial power, on the propriety of intervention in the affairs of other African states. But in many other matters, these four men have more in common with each other than the first two with, say, Nasser or Bourguiba. It is not only a question of earlier comradeship, of a common language, of a struggle against a common colonial overlord, although these things count, too; it is more than the relation of master and pupils which was that of Félix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast and Sékou Touré's generation of French-speaking African nationalists (though this, too, plays a part). It is these things, *plus* the belief in a cultural and historical destiny that was interrupted by the colonial intrusion, and the restless search in the muted past for a tradition that could be revived. These are the bonds that unite a Senghor to a Touré or an Nkrumah, and which none of them shares with the Arab or Berber leaders of northern Africa. Another is race.

Sékou Touré wrote, in the report I have already quoted, that Guinea was "like all countries whose normal and natural process of development was interrupted by the colonial fact." Some twenty years earlier, Kwame Nkrumah wrote in his pamphlet *Towards Colonial Freedom*: "The African ... was perfectly capable of governing himself before the advent of the white man and should be allowed to do so again."

In Senghor's work, this notion of "interrupted development," of a white intervention arresting the black man's growth, is carried to the refinement of erudite research. *"Négritude"* sums up Senghor's Africanism. "Negro" means "black" and his intellectual and emotional obsession is the re-discovery of "Negro-African civilisation"—a concept in which race as well as culture is a component. In his own words:

> The natural environment is not the only determination that helps one to understand Negro-African civilisation. There is also race.[7]

Négritude was not Senghor's invention, and he freely attributes it to Aimé Césaire, the Martiniquais poet; but if Césaire invented it, Senghor gave content to it and diffused it throughout French-speaking Africa and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere. It is a self-conscious expression of the singularity, cultural and racial, of the black African. It complements, rather than competes with, Nkrumah's "Pan-Africanism" and "African Personality." By definition, however, it is less aggressive, politically, than "Pan-Africanism:" for "Négritude" is a condition, a search for a common denominator of Africanism; the "Pan" in "Pan-Africanism," on the other hand, can be translated: "I am my brother's keeper."[8]

I met Léopold Senghor and Modibo Keita within a few days of one another in November, 1960, three months after the short-lived Mali Federation they had jointly created had exploded in their faces. They are profoundly dissimilar, as indeed are their respective peoples, the Senegalese and Soudanese; and the wonder is not that they parted but that they ever worked together in the first place. And yet, however dissimilar the personalities of the two men, the thoughts they harbour are, in certain respects, strikingly akin. Is it that the Africanness—the *Négritude*—of both transcends the closed frontier, the broken rail links between Senegal and Mali-Soudan?

That could be the explanation. True, Senghor talks of race while Keita does not, and Keita is less free with "isms" than Senghor. But that is only because Senghor's method is intellectual and philosophical where Keita's is practical and commonsensical. In the end, the cerebral flights of the one and the pragmatic thrusting of the other result in much the same social and economic prescriptions for their respective countries. Senghor has completed a circle that began with socialism and has ended with it. His discovery that Marxism was a Western European system of ideas coincided with the sudden awareness of himself as a Negro. This was in 1928; he became a racialist (*"J'étais raciste à un point tel qu'une femme blanche, ça me laissait froid. Et pourtant, j'ai épousé une Française"*), and embraced Césaire's *Négritude*. But *Négritude* led to nationalism and thence to humanism, and humanism to internationalism, to religion, and back to socialism—minus Marx (*"En dépassant le Marxisme, nous avons redécouvert la religion"*). Having thus returned to earth (for I am foreshortening a very long conversation), President Senghor told me he could con-

[7] *Séminaire de la Jeunesse du Mali*. Dakar, May, 1960.

[8] Cf. "Léopold Senghor," Encounter, February 1961.

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ceive the future of Senegal only in socialist terms: that is, through the creation of co-operatives and a controlled economy.

More reserved, President Modibo Keita opens up to the possibly hostile stranger only when prodded. My prodding was mild enough: I asked him whether it would be correct to describe Mali's single, ruling party—the *Union Soudanaise*—as a party of Marxist character. The grave face in the slate-blue, open-necked bush jacket laughed out loud. My question, he said, was amusing, for such terms as "Marxism" and "Communism" were not applicable to Africa. Ninety-two per cent. of the people of Mali were illiterate; their poverty ruled out investment except in the sense of direct contribution (that is, through work: Sékou Touré's term for the same concept of voluntary labour is *investissements humains*). The role of the party was to explain the government's decisions to the people, *before* they had been announced. If the reverse applied—that is, if the peasants learned of decisions affecting them through the radio, for instance—then the people might not understand, and government and people would be separated. The economy could only be a controlled one, and more co-operatives—agricultural and commercial—must be created. But wasn't this precisely Senghor's prescription for Senegal?

I should hesitate whether to ascribe this similarity between old associates and recent enemies to their former association, to their shared experience of French colonialism in evolution, to *Négritude* or to the implacable facts of African life. But it would surely be a mistake to think of "socialism" as a component of the African personality. It may be remarkable that men as diverse as Senghor, Touré, and Nkrumah should think of themselves as socialists, but so do Nenni and Gaitskell, Nehru and Mohammed Hatta; and then again, neither Houphouët-Boigny nor Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who are African leaders, appears to consider himself a socialist.

Nor for that matter do those other Africans —those northern, whiter Africans—Habib Bourguiba and Ferhat Abbas, whatever the views of some of the men around them. Whether, in the secret obscurities of their minds, they think of themselves as "Africans," I have no idea; what is certain is that they are participants in the Pan-African movement. For Pan-Africanism, unlike *Négritude*, is a political movement. It is also, be it said, a band-wagon, and at its re-launching in 1957, after some years of inertia, the Arabs and Berbers of northern Africa took care to jump on it.

PAN-AFRICANISM, like *Négritude*, was an invention of racial expatriates[9]: the West Indian lawyer Henry Sylvester Williams, the American Negroes Marcus Garvey and Dr. William du Bois and, above all, perhaps, the Jamaican George Padmore, author of *Pan-Africanism or Communism?* There seemed no room, in the original Pan-African concept, for the white or light-brown Berbers or Arabs of Africa north of the Sahara. It goes without saying that Pan-Africanism was—and remains —anti-colonial, and if African nationalism shares anything with Arab nationalism it is an awareness of the artificiality of boundaries drawn by the colonial powers and a determination to transcend them and draw new maps.

Both before and since the second world war, Pan-Africanism has largely consisted of conferences. There is no need to mention or describe them all, but since those of recent date bridge the Saharan gap, they deserve a few words. It is enlightening that the first conference of independent African states was born of conversations between President Bourguiba of Tunisia and Dr. Nkrumah during the Ghana independence celebrations in March, 1957. The Tunisian Ambassador in London, Mr. Taïeb Slim, was with them and was one of the organisers of the conference, which eventually took place at Accra during April 15–22, 1958. The Tunisians had the greatest difficulty in persuading their black fellow-continentals that they, too, were Africans, but the persuasion worked. In the event, indeed, the black African states were outnumbered, as they were bound to be at that time, by the Arab ones. There were three of the one (Ghana, Ethiopia, and Liberia) and five of the other (Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, and United Arab Republic, half of which—the Syrian province—was in Asia). At any rate, the Arabs were "in," and they stayed in thereafter.

It must not be supposed, however, that Pan-Africanism or the African personality compete for the attention of Bourguiba or Abbas on equal terms with their dominant preoccupations: the Algerian war and the future of the

[9] Cf. *Bandoeng et le Réveil des Peuples Colonisés*, by Odette Guitard (Presses Universitaires de France, 1961, pp. 88–89).

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Maghreb.[10] If the Pan-African movement, in Nasser's eyes, is one source of power, among others, for the Arab world, in Maghrebin eyes it is a reinforcement against French militarism, a defence in depth, a supply of solidarity for the thin Arabo-Berber line that fringes the southern Mediterranean.

I FOUND Ferhat Abbas more inclined to talk of fundamentals than President Bourguiba, when I met them, within a few days of each other, in February, 1958. But that may have been because the Algerian leader was temporarily *hors de combat* when I saw him at Montreux, where he was resting after a car accident. He told me a good deal, in response to my questions, about the organisation of the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale*, and about his plans for the future. But his unprompted statements—which I could not have expected—dealt with the relations between Christianity and Islam. His argument was that there was less to divide Christians from Muslims than Christians from Jews. He saw the Suez expedition as a Christian expedition against Islam, as indeed, in his eyes, the Algerian war was a Christian aggression against Islam. I had not heard this point of view expounded and had not thought of them in such terms. "Islam," said Mr. Abbas, "teaches that Moses was the writing of God, Jesus the soul of God, and Mohammed the friend of God. But for the Jews, Jesus was only the natural son of Joseph and Mary. We are much nearer to you than the Jews." The expansion of Islam, he went on, belonged to the past; there was no need to fear a revival of it and the time had come for reconciliation.

I found Bourguiba in a less contemplative mood, both then and two years later, at our second meeting. Bourguiba is, in any event, less philosopher than man of action, less the ideologist than the politician and statesman. He is a remarkable personality, perhaps the ablest and most mature leader of the Afro-Asian world, except Nehru. But so long as the Algerian war goes on, he sits on a volcano and, indeed, the image is one he often returns to. Hence both our conversations dwelt with Tunisia's familiar fears and obsessions: how to keep the Algerian war from spreading, especially to Tunisia; how to persuade the British and Americans to stop aiding the French; how to stop the F.L.N.'s slide towards Communism. These obsessions were only too understandable: on February 8, 1958, the day after our first meeting, French bombers wrecked the Tunisian frontier village of Sakiet-sidi-Youssef; and a month before our second meeting (which took place on February 25, 1960), the *ultras* of Algiers had thrown up barricades in an effort to bring down General de Gaulle for plotting, as they thought, to end the Algerian war. One remark Bourguiba made at our first meeting, however, is not irrelevant to a study of the African personality. It concerned the Algerian F.L.N. By persuasive eloquence, we may be sure, the Tunisian leader had induced Ferhat Abbas and his men to transfer their headquarters from Cairo to Tunis. Now he was afraid they were planning to move back to Cairo. It was a double fear, which he expressed in these words: "What I am afraid of is that the F.L.N. will go to the Communists by way of Nasserism" (and he gave the last few words, *par la voie du Nassérisme*, the ultimate ounce of emphasis that his naturally emphatic delivery could express).

THE RELEVANCE of this statement to the Pan-African theme lies, I suggest, in the breach it makes in the concept of unity implicit in Pan-Africanism. Whatever mystical communion unites Nyasa and Kikuyu, Peul and Zulu, whatever feeling of fraternity brings the word "brother" to the lips of an African visiting the Negroes of Harlem, is not necessarily shared among the *leaders* of the emerging African nations. Bourguiba and Nasser are both leading participants in Pan-African manifestations, but Nasser gives shelter to Bourguiba's bitterest enemy, Salah ben Youssef, and Bourguiba believes Nasser to have been implicated in a Youssefist plot against his life. These factors helped to keep Bourguiba away from the conference of "militant" African leaders at Casablanca in January. (Another factor was the coolness of relations between Bourguiba and that least likely of Pan-Africanists, the late Mohammed V of Morocco, who was host to the conference.)

Casablanca will seem, indeed, in the retrospect of history, both a symbol of one kind of African personality and an exposure of Pan-

[10] On the other hand, President Bourguiba devoted almost as much attention to Pan-African problems as to Algeria in his end-of-the-year speech to the Tunisian people on December 30, 1960.

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African limitations. Bourguiba's decision not to participate was only one of the signs that Pan-Africanism was not yet all-embracing; another was that President Abboud of the Sudan also declined an invitation. A further sign was that President Nkrumah, who did go, chose to recognise Mauretania's independence on the eve of his departure, although his host, the King of Morocco, claims sovereignty over that country. Apart from Dr. Nkrumah, the participants included President Nasser, Sékou Touré, Modibo Keita and Ferhat Abbas, in his capacity as Prime Minister of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic. They declared their "intention to withdraw their forces from the United Nations Command" in the Congo—a provision that applied to the U.A.R., Guinea, Ghana, and Morocco. Four weeks later, the U.A.R. and Guinean contingents had been flown out of the Congo, but the Ghanaians and Moroccans had stayed on; and three weeks after that, the U.A.R. had joined Liberia and Ceylon in sponsoring a resolution—which the U.N. Security Council approved—authorising the United Nations Command in the Congo, for the first time, to use force "as a last resort." There is no need to dissect in detail the anatomy of these moral changes of face. Instead, I offer a point and draw a moral. The point is that the Casablanca Declaration could only mean that the participants in the conference wished to weaken the U.N. Command, whereas the resolution sponsored by the U.A.R. enhanced the authority of the U.N. Command and implied that it would have to be militarily strengthened.

The moral is that the divisive considerations of power, national interest, expediency, and rivalries of leadership are much stronger, at present, than the cohesive strength of Pan-African Declarations.

I SHOULD NOT like it to be thought that I am cynical about either the African Personality or Pan-Africanism, much less that I question the sincerity of those who use such slogans or labels. I have no doubt that when the Presidents of Mali, Ghana, and Guinea proclaim a union of their countries—as they did on December 24 last—they are sincere and will henceforth think of their countries as "united," even though, intellectually, all three must be aware that a union of Ghana, Guinea, and Mali, in anything more than a symbolical sense, hardly comes within the range of practical politics in the immediate future. Many observers have been struck by the ease with which contradictory notions appear to cohabit in African minds; but no European could claim that inconsistency was unknown among Europeans.

If one tries to be not cynical but clear-sighted, one is bound to notice that there is no common denominator except "anti-colonialism" and continental geography between the Negro and Arab (or Arabo-Berber) leaders of Africa; and "anti-colonialism" is not peculiar to Africa. Despite the existence of "bridge-nations," like the Sudan and Mauretania, there is no real affinity between Negro-Africans and Arabs. Islam, though it provides a nominal link between, say, Nasser and Modibo Keita, bypasses Senghor (a Catholic) and Nkrumah (who describes himself as a "non-denominational Christian"). The cement of past humiliation that binds Negro-Africans together keeps them apart from the Arabs as well as from the Europeans, for both shared the guilt of the slave trade. Indeed, Arab slave traders, like Tippoo Tip in the Congo of Stanley's day, outdid the Europeans at this sinister game, and the traffic continues to this day in some Arab lands. Nor is it easy to see how the Berber fits into the concept of *Négritude*. (Senghor faces the difficulty by terming the Berbers "marginal whites" and talks of the need for a "Negro-Berber humanism," but such formulæ, though a tribute to Senghor's own humanity, can hardly create identity where none exists.)

THE TRUTH IS, as one suspected all along, that there is more than one African Personality: eastern Arab and western Arab (or Maghrebin, or Arabo-Berber), Negro-African and, perhaps, Hamitic as well. (For Senghor, the Hamitic peoples are "marginal Negroes," just as the Berbers are "marginal whites.") African regionalism, anti-colonialism, and other factors will continue to bring representatives of some of these African "personalities" together on public platforms; and rivalries or ideological divergences will continue to keep them apart from others.

If the search for the African Personality is confined to Africa south of the Sahara, it becomes more productive, though still not absolutely conclusive. When Ghanaians talk, as they often do, about the need to build up Dr. Nkrumah as "an expression of our

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African personality," they imply, perhaps unwittingly, that the personality itself needs greater definition. And when Africans talk of doing things "in the African way," they mean, for instance, that the methods of Westminster or the Palais Bourbon are ill-adapted to African conditions and that African traditions must be searched for ways of improving the European model by making it acceptable to Africans.

All this is understandable and ought not to be resented by non-Africans. What is in doubt is the end-product of the African search for a Personality. Will Africans be guided by Aimé Césaire, the apostle of *Négritude*, who extolled the Negro-Africans as those who never invented anything, who never conquered anything, "but who, in awe, give themselves up to the essence of things"? This is hardly likely. The African leaders of to-day have no desire to put the clock back, even though they do not accept the suggestion that their ancestors never invented anything. Senghor himself, though a disciple of Césaire's, has spoken of:

> ... the surprise of the first European navigators disembarking in Africa at discovering well-organised States, each with its government, administration, justice, and army, with techniques—remarkable for the period—in wood, ivory, bronze, iron, basket-making, weaving, and terracotta, with medical and agricultural techniques worthy of Europe.[11]

And Nkrumah has said: "When Africa is free and independent, we shall see a matchless blossoming of the human spirit. . . . She (Africa) is not an extension either of Europe or of any other continent. Thus we wish to develop our own community at the same time as an African personality."[12]

By degrees, then, we have drawn nearer this elusive personality—as near, probably, as one can get to this embryonic *something* that is still in the making. It is compounded of racial kinship (though Pan-Africanists are not necessarily racialists, no matter what Sir Roy Welensky may say); a consciousness of social and cultural disruption and a desire to rediscover what was good in the past, a collective memory of humiliation and an assertion of equality with all men (which surprisingly seldom becomes assertiveness through "overcompensation"); and a feeling of the ultimate brotherhood of all Negro-Africans, irrespective of doctrinal or political differences. Clearly, such components are accessible only to the relatively sophisticated. In its political aspects, Pan-Africanism is practicable only to the extent that tribalism is abolished; as for brotherhood, Nkrumah and Nyerere doubtless feel they are brothers, but not the Luluas and Balubas of the Congo when they are massacring each other.

To-morrow's African Personality will grow out of a de-tribalised society, preserving the arts and crafts of the past, transposing the social organisation of the village to the national level and grafting the techniques of the white man on to the more primitive skills of the African inheritance.

[11] *Séminaire de la Jeunesse du Mali* (Dakar, May 1960).

[12] Extract from President Nkrumah's speech at the African People's Conference, Accra, December, 1958.

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Colin MacInnes

The Heart of a Legend

The Writings of Ada Leverson

IT IS an unjust fate for a great artist to become so much entangled in a legend that a personality is better known than an achievement. This has been the lot of Ada Leverson, whose name is so honourably remembered, and whose writing remains disproportionately unread. The legend is a particularly obstinate barrier to her art, because it is threefold: one part of it misleadingly surrounding her own self, the other two parts willed on her by fellow artists whom she loved and served.

To dispose first, if one can, of the most tenacious of these legendary reputations: the one arising from her friendship for Oscar Wilde. Now, of Oscar Wilde it is impossible, in most senses, to write with other than a total admiration. The human person—who, though known only to us by report, is instantly realised to be as splendid as extraordinary—and the writer of the one great play (but I think of nothing else) can never be praised enough, nor honoured. But as for the trials and their ensuing catastrophe, the time has surely come to say that they have become an appalling nuisance and, so far as Wilde the artist is concerned, essentially an irrelevance.

It must be said—though with entire commiseration for his suffering—that Oscar Wilde the "homosexual martyr" was no martyr, and Oscar Wilde the "artist-hero" was no hero. That he did not say out loud and clear, in 1895, "Very well, I am—now justify your law" is all too understandable; yet only by saying this would he have been heroic. That the social rules on homosexuality, however idiotic and inhuman, were perfectly well known, must mean that anyone who provoked their drastic application was no martyr. Wilde was not pursued and persecuted by authority: he invited it to ruin him. His provocation was no desperate device to discredit an evil law: he accepted the rules, and imagined he could twist them. And when the inevitable ensued, one cannot but feel—if alone from the evidence of his own previous writing—that the catastrophe was one he in some ways had always longed for. All this makes his fate pitiful, certainly; and furnishes no excuse to those who, from the passage of the bad law until his final condemnation, first baited and then sprung their snare. But it was not a tragic fate, despite his dignity and courage: it was one pathetic and self-chosen.

THE DEEP, THE MORBID, the strangely excessive interest in Wilde's trials is due, I believe, chiefly to our own equally morbid, excessive, and grotesque obsession with the fact of homosexuality: of which we have contrived, with poisonous effect, to make a "problem" altogether vaster than its real moral, personal, and social problems are. This sick interest, it would also seem to me, is that of a people fundamentally indifferent and even hostile to art and artists, since the trials present, to such superficial minds, the triple advantage of demonstrating that one of our most gifted and attractive writers was a monster; more still, of satisfying a distortedly "dramatic" conception of what "the artist" is (a man of self-sought sorrows and not, as essentially, a creative worker); and mostly of relieving such persons from the necessity of reading anything Wilde wrote: since thanks to the trials (and to the infinity of books, and now films, that monotonously and inaccurately describe them), everyone "knows all about him."

As also is now well known, among the half-dozen men and women in all Europe who, in his disaster, were true to their friendship for Wilde (and to all they had said to him, and about him, in his days of glory), the most outstanding—and most beautiful by the practical tact of what she did for him—was Ada Leverson. The best account of what took place

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remains her own;[1] and I should wish to add—as this is usually neglected—that it seems to me the conduct of her husband, Ernest Leverson, was also most noble: since—as we must always remind ourselves when giving its true weight to what she and he both did—"society," in 1895, could be irrevocably ruthless to those who offended it; and conduct deemed "inappropriate" in a husband might well have been judged even more severely than would his wife's. What Ada Leverson herself did is quite beyond praise: it all seems so obvious now, and yet a moment's honest reflection should persuade most of us that we would not ourselves have done it—perhaps not even thought of doing it. Nevertheless: anyone who thinks, as I most surely do, that Ada Leverson is in her own right and by her own achievement a very great artist indeed, may feel that from the point of view of her own literary reputation (which is, of course, a factor that her generous soul would not even have considered), the most fatal step she ever took was to behave, to Wilde, so well and so unselfishly. For Wilde, most unquestionably, is in the matter of his "legend" a terrible vampire: like some strange, greedy planet, his name and repute have absorbed and flung into orbit round his memory so many human moons—and even, in the case of Ada Leverson, one rare star. It is surely high time that as an artist she be rescued from this association most honourable to herself; and that it be realised, as I hope to demonstrate, that save for *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Ada Leverson was certainly Wilde's equal and, I believe, ultimately a finer writer.

THE NEXT LEGEND that must be unravelled, or set in its fit proportion, is that woven round Ada Leverson's name by Sir Osbert Sitwell in the fifth volume of his autobiographical *Left Hand, Right Hand!*; and called, it will be remembered, *Noble Essences, or Courteous Recollections*. Of the four prior volumes I would say that their author has created (if that is the word to apply to an actual person) in his study of Sir George Sitwell, his father, one of the most extraordinary "characters" of English literature. The vast halls and ante-rooms of the book which conduct us, finally and superbly, to the revelations of Sir George's private dwelling, resemble, by the encumbrance of accessory and often immensely tedious detail—and by the neo-baroque convolutions and ornate parodies of prose by which these are described—a sort of *Sagrada Familia* erected by a literary Gaudí; but all this cannot detract from the ultimate triumph of the portrait of Sir George; and does indeed serve, by the very contrast of the obsessive perambulations of the minor themes and of the polished peculiarities of language, to provide a complicated yet most effective décor in which the fine realism and deep imagination of the evocation of the writer's father are eventually, and most marvellously, presented.

But when we come to read the *Noble Essences*—which are, of course, in a sense a book apart—the impression is often, to be frank, unpleasant. It is but damning with faint praise to say that one is grateful for the information the author gives about these splendid men and women; and in the case of Ada Leverson herself, I must own it was not until I read this book that I knew she was a writer. But the great defect is this: it is precisely *not* as a writer that, in the book, Ada Leverson is portrayed. It is as a sort of adjunct, or satellite, or mascot even of the author: loved and admired, certainly, and greatly esteemed, but condescended to; and not seemingly cherished for what ought to be the most important thing about her—that she was an artist also; and in her case, a great one. And although this was certainly not the intention of the volume—which clearly was to do high honour to the artists whom it celebrates—the unfortunate impression grows upon the reader that beyond all the noble essences therein described, there stands one nobler even than them all.

THE THIRD "LEGEND" shrouding Ada Leverson which one must also try to peel aside, is the one created unintentionally by herself. It is a regrettable reality of the "literary world"—yet one of which any writer concerned with his ultimate "reputation" must take some account—that writers, to a great extent, are valued in their day, and even by posterity, very much at the value which they seem to place upon themselves; or which they permit, by genuine indifference or neglect, their contemporaries to place upon them. Of course no reputation, be it nursed however ardently, can be sustained without the presence of a talent; and it is true that later reassessments of neglected or self-neglected artists, sometimes do take place. Yet because it is hard to learn and easy to forget, "the world," if not reminded, will prefer to leave a talent in oblivion.

As an artist, no one could have been more careless of her "literary reputation" than was Ada Leverson (which is one of the many attractive things about her). Although in quantitative fact and, as I hope to show, by quality, she was in the most entire sense a professional writer, she never was, nor cared to be, a *femme de lettres*: the notion would have seemed to her preposterous, a bore. Throughout the 1890s, she

[1] *Letters to the Sphinx from Oscar Wilde* (Duckworth, 1930).

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printed innumerable occasional pieces in topical magazines—many of which are only now being disinterred; and between 1907 and 1916 she published six novels of outstanding merit. But all this was made to seem "effortless" in two ways. The style itself, and the whole tone of these six volumes, convey—unless one is attentive—the impression that the thing is all too easy: as if it were set down, in random moments, by a beautiful and brilliant lover of life and art between outings on idle afternoons. So far as her own attitude to her work went, she was the kind of person—as wonderful as rare—whose sense of *chic* and inborn dislike of all pomposities (not least among "creative" people) would forbid her to make claims for herself that others would not spontaneously make for her. Her chief delight was in the victorious achievement of her friends; for friendship was as dear to her as love, and she was in both an artist. Thus, one can imagine her joy if on the publication of a novel, a friend told her he admired it (the more so if he could tell her, very exactly, why). But to imagine her pressing a volume into a friend's hand, let alone undertaking that kind of artistic lobbying which helps to establish and preserve a literary "name," is quite impossible. Of Edith Ottley, heroine in three of her novels, and whom one may with little doubt assume to be something of a self-portrait, Ada Leverson has this to say:

> Such vanity as she had was not in an uneasy condition; she cared very little for general admiration, and had no feeling for competition. She was without ambition to be superior to others.

IT IS THUS that the notion has arisen—and has been sustained in many a preposterous study of "the nineties" or of "the Edwardian era"—that as well as being a literary acolyte (albeit one greatly cherished) Ada Leverson was a gifted, casual non-professional. To this absurd impertinence, her writings now may make reply.

The Twelfth Hour, her first novel, was published when she was already reaching her middle years.[2] The competence of plot and structure, the swift, sharp establishment of character, and the easy, laconic urbanity of style, suggest—which was indeed the case—that although a "first novel," this is the work of an experienced writer. Subsequently to be developed in depth and range, the essential Ada Leverson themes and tone are already apparent. Her two chief themes are: first, the relations of men and women bound by marriage or—put less conventionally—the reconciliation of the eagerness for individual life and personal fulfilment, in each of the two partners, with the moral imperative of their promise to each other: for marriage, or love-in-marriage (rather than love before it, or outside it) is seen in terms of a bond of loyalty—the free promise—much more than of ties imposed by faith or law. And since she clearly approves of and delights in the life-loving individuality of the wife and husband, and yet as equally believes a promise *is* a promise and that full personal self-realisation can best be achieved through keeping this primal vow, the central conflict of her books is always the way in which their chief protagonists, the married man and woman, will confront and resolve this situation. Her secondary theme—though almost of equal weight—is friendship, to which it is clear she attached great human value. It is often believed that friendship is a masculine speciality. In the Ada Leverson world, at all events, it isn't: for though there are competent descriptions of friendships between men, the most sensitive and complex are those she creates between women and men (and these *are* real friendships, not failed or potential love affairs) and just as effectively—if surprisingly—friendships between women themselves. As for the Ada Leverson tone or mood, it is one of amused, affectionate, and occasionally ironic or contemptuous acceptance of her characters' behaviour: often presented in scenes of such deadpan absurdity that the reader must be alert indeed to catch, in so many throwaway lines, each double meaning. This is not to say that her attitude to her characters (and hence to life) is uncritical: indeed it is, and the "detached" urbanity of tone never entirely masks (unless the reader wishes to see no further) her underlying seriousness about life, and what matters most in it. But she never "judges:" never bullies her characters, or erects them to knock them down; and never forces her own views (while making them quite apparent) upon the reader, to whom she clearly feels her duty is to entertain and, if "instruct," only to do so by providing all the clues by which the reader can do this for himself if he so wishes.

ADA LEVERSON BELONGS, in fact, to a category of writer rather unusual in England—and of which Congreve may be the great exemplar—the classic author of the comedy of manners. This sort of art reveals itself, in form, by a harmonious construction, parts deftly related to the whole, subsidiary themes neatly tucked away in echoing

[2] Ada Leverson was born in 1862 and died, aged seventy, in 1933. Her six novels, originally published by Grant Richards, and re-issued during 1950–51 by Chapman & Hall, are: *The Twelfth Hour* (1907); *Love's Shadow* (1908); *The Limit* (1911); *Tenterhooks* (1912); *Bird of Paradise* (1914); *Love at Second Sight* (1916).

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counterpoint; next, in language, by a studied but easy and relaxed precision, with flights of dialogue tossed to and fro like aery but well-directed shuttlecocks; and then in theme, by the perpetually underlying presence, amid all this apparent accident of episode, of an essential drama: sometimes hinted at with such obliqueness that the sudden glimpses of its dangerous deep turbulence can be, to the reader (if he does not miss them), quite alarming; and at last, after phrases and chapters have skimmed like butterflies or birds over a clear still pool, there is the abrupt, positive confrontation—often on the very brink of irredeemable disaster—with the conflict in its total, perilous reality. Once it is thus realised what the writer is about, the gay, flitting, entertaining and, apparently, "inconsequential" chapters soon assume their other as yet unstated, but already fully present, dramatic dimension. The "frivolity" becomes meaningful, the nonsense potentially sad. This is not farce, not "witty writing," but true comedy: and of it, Ada Leverson is a master.

Though one mode of writing may not be more or less "difficult" than another (to whoever may be good at either), it would seem the classic writer must be technically more assured. To appear not to be saying what in fact you are, to achieve, save in rare "moments of truth," effects of feeling (those both of characters and writer) by implication, demands a tight-rope dexterity, since to hit the wrong note is to tumble at once into sentiment or farce; and to develop all the themes, major and minor, hold them in a firm yet delicate grip, and conduct them at the correct pace in each episode—and as if by the wish of nature—with a swift final sweep to their "inevitable" resolution, requires enormous talent and self-discipline. It will escape no attentive reader of Ada Leverson's books that she has surely been much influenced—or helped—in achieving some of these effects by her love for and knowledge of the theatre: indeed, many of her scenes in which the dialogue develops entirely without "author's interjections," seem almost borrowed from an unpublished play. More peculiar still (although admittedly, the bioscope was well enough known by the turn of the century—but not yet the innovations of D. W. Griffith) is her frequent use of film scenario devices: "cutting" briskly from scene to scene, or situation to situation, without any "explanation" (of which indeed, so neatly is it done, there is no need); and even more strangely, "editing in" scenes and themes apparently unrelated to the one that, in realistic terms, she is just then evoking.

A FINAL BUT PERSISTENT ERROR about her art (one held, I suppose, by those who have not read her or with one eye open only) must be assailed before her novels are examined in more detail: and this is that Ada Leverson is an "Edwardian," or "period" writer. Our custom, in thinking of the past (especially the recent English past), would seem to be to get into our heads some notion about an epoch (the "nineties," the "twenties," or whenever it may be), and then imperatively demand that any actual "figure" of that period should conform to the stereotype of our imaginings; and also, fail wilfully to remember (in our blindfold thirst for "period atmosphere") that the past always was, at one time, its own present. The word "Edwardian," for example, conjures up a host of clichés about which the chief point, so far as Ada Leverson is concerned, is that even were these all exact she could never have herself conformed to them, as a woman or a writer, because she was, in every page of everything she wrote, an acutely devastating critic of her own age. It is hopeless to look in her books for "Edwardian raw material" which we of to-day may then digest and comment on: for she herself, anticipating us by a half-century, has already performed this task. The key to "situating" her in this respect is to grasp (as on reading her, one so swiftly can) that she was not an "Edwardian natural" at all, but a most sharp (albeit most indulgent) observer of all things Edwardian. As a writer, in consequence, she is in no sense "period:" no one, in fact, could be of her own day more "modern:" which is precisely what gives to her books—except for their inevitable account of the accessory paraphernalia of Edwardian life—their timeless actuality.[3]

As a corollary to this, she has also dourly been reproached with a culpable unawareness of social and material factors of her period. This seems to me an amazingly blind charge, since how things work, and what things cost, and how it feels to be rich or poor (she had, in her own life, experience of both)—often, indeed, precisely demonstrated with figures spelled out in pounds shillings and pence—are constantly recurring preoccupations. As for the social structure of

[3] Not only was she well "abreast of" her times, but so often proves herself to have been well ahead of them. Among countless instances of this (always introduced with characteristic aplomb and indifference to effect) are a reference, in *Tenterhooks* (published in 1912 and presumably written in 191-), to Cubist paintings (the first Cubist picture was painted in 1906) and to "primitive art:" both surely little known at that time in England, even in *avant-garde* circles. In *Love at Second Sight* (1916) there is an extremely astute analysis of Futurism, which begins, "Well, of course, they are already past. They always were. . . ."

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her day, the variety of social groups her characters are drawn from, and the fullness of her knowledge of them all, are equally apparent. (As one would expect, when the 1914 war comes, it also comes organically into her picture of the new Georgian society.) In short, although a classicist in form, she is most certainly a realist in content. Edwardian "society" evidently interested (and diverted) her, and she knew very much about it; but it is the social relations of human persons, and not "society" itself, that is her chief and most cherished raw material.

IN *The Twelfth Hour*, then, the central situation is that the young marriage between Felicity and her husband Chetwode is imperilled not because of dangers from without, but because he (who loves horses and antique furniture second only to herself) is taking her fidelity outrageously for granted, and she is too proud—or respects herself too much—to tell him so. The sub-plots are the love of Felicity's younger sister, Sylvia, for Woodville, who is "eligible" in every way except for the essential financial; and of the divided love of Felicity's younger brother Savile (who is sixteen) for Dolly (fourteen) and, at the same fatal time, for the celebrated *diva* Mme. Adelina Patti. Subsidiary characters are the brother and sisters' devotedly bullying Aunt William (so called because her late husband, Uncle Mary, seemed to them less a man than she); Sir James Crofton, their father, a pompous, self-contradictory, good-hearted parliamentarian; Mr. Ridokanaki, the Greek financier, initially (and vainly) in love with Sylvia, and ultimately to be the *deus ex machina*; the "artistic" ("in a continual state of vague enthusiasm") Vera Ogilvie; and such fleeting figures as Agatha, Mrs. Wilkinson, so named by the family because, although a commoner, her mien is decidedly aristocratic.

Let us first observe the swift economy with which Ada Leverson presents some of her characters:

> "No hurry, no hurry," said Sir James, with that air of self-denial that conveys the urgent necessity of intense speed.
>
> He pondered a few moments about nothing whatever. . . . (*Sir James again.*)
>
> Sylvia had that curious gift, abstract beauty, the sort of beauty that recalls vaguely some ideal or antique memory.
>
> And she would receive excuses from servants with a smile so sweet yet so incredulous that it disarmed deceit and made incompetence hide its head (or give notice). (*Sylvia once more.*)
>
> Before he left, Aunt William pressed a sovereign into his hand guiltily, as if it were conscience money. He, on his side, took it as though it were a doctor's fee, and both ignored the transaction. (*Aunt William tipping her nephew Savile.*)
>
> He had a triangular face, the details of which were vague though the outline was clear, like a negative that has been left too long in the sun. (*Mr. Ridokanaki.*)
>
> Ridokanaki looked at the clock. It immediately struck ten, tactfully, in a clear subdued tone.
>
> Woodville met unflinchingly that terrible gaze of the inquisitional innocent woman, before which men, guilty or guiltless equally, assume the same self-conscious air of shame. (*Woodville at odds with Sylvia.*)
>
> One really rare possession she certainly had—a husband who, notwithstanding that he felt a mild dislike for her merely, bullied her and interfered with her quite as much as if he were wildly in love. (*Mr. and Mrs. Ogilvie.*)
>
> He pressed her hand with a look that he hoped conveyed the highest respect, the tenderest sympathy, a deep, though carefully suppressed passion, and a longing to administer some refined and courteous consolation, and went away. (*Bertie Wilton, Felicity's ineffective—and unsuccessful—admirer.*)
>
> "I didn't hear," he answered. "I was listening to your voice." (*Chetwode to his wife Felicity, after their final reconciliation.*)
>
> Sir James was extremely annoyed with the weather. (*Opening sentence of the final chapter.*)

Let us also see how she establishes décor—always integral to the situation she is describing.

> Sir James sat down slowly on a depressed leather uneasy chair, and said. . . .
>
> A palm, on its last legs, draped in shabby green silk, was dying by the window.
>
> Comparatively early, and quite suddenly, the rooms were crowded on the usual principle that no one will arrive till everyone is there. They were filled with that inaudible yet loud chatter and the uncomfortable throng which is the one certain sign that a party is a success. (*Reception at Sir James's.*)
>
> The party met fairly punctually in the hideous hall, furnished with draughts and red velvet. The gloom was intensified by the sound of an emaciated orchestra playing "She was a Miller's Daughter," with a thin reckless airiness that was almost ghostly. (*Visit to Mme Tussaud's.*)
>
> It was the end of a warm April day; they passed quickly, in the jingling cab, through the stale London streets, breathing the spring air that paradoxically suggested country walks, tender vows, sentiment and romance. . . .

Two short quotations that define the potential "drama" between Felicity and her loving, but too casual husband, Chetwode.

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> Men who indulge in inexpensive cynicism say that women are complex and difficult to understand. This may be true of an ambitious and hard woman, but nothing can be more simple and direct than a woman in love.
>
> And he ought not always to be satisfied to leave her safe as the gem of the collection—and just come and look at it sometimes.

BUT TO ILLUSTRATE the development of her main themes, and particularly the harrowing skill with which the tragedy, as yet undeclared, can be suddenly and dangerously seen (although in fact, in this book, it is to be prevented at "the twelfth hour" by the husband and wife's moment of self-realisation), only extended quotation would be effective. (Readers may be referred, for the chief instance of this, to Chapter 24—*The Explanation*.) Such moments of peril are made all the more telling by the counterpoint of comedy—particularly evident in the juxtapositions of the five final chapters. I cannot leave this book without pointing out two notable minor felicities: the art and understanding by which Ada Leverson makes so apparent that the sisters and brother, Felicity, Sylvia, and Savile, although so different, are most manifestly consanguinious; and the adorable portrait of young Savile himself—who by his immense assurance and his immense gaps of ignorance, seems a prototype for the contemporary teenager. Savile, in fact, almost steals the book, and captures its final sentence. The writer is describing, at the "happy ending" (happy, that is, once the tragedy of its two chief characters has been laid bare and avoided), the marriage of the subheroine, Sylvia, to Woodville.

> Of course it was to be a long engagement and a quiet wedding; but entirely through the eager impetuosity of Sir James, they were married in six weeks, and every one said that in general splendour and gorgeousness it surpassed even the wedding of Sir James's elder daughter. Savile's attitude as best man was of such extraordinary correctness that it was the feature of the ceremony, and even distracted public attention from the bride and bridegroom.

I OMIT for the moment the next book (*Love's Shadow*) since it is the first of three that have the same heroine, Edith Ottley, and which I would therefore like to discuss together. The third book, then, *The Limit*, has essentially the same theme as *The Twelfth Hour* but with developments in depth and even harshness: since in this case the husband and wife, Romer and Valentia, are not such amiable persons as were Chetwode and Felicity; and the potential lover, Harry de Freyne, in addition to being an unworthy "charmer," is clearly a more real danger to the marriage than was, in *The Twelfth Hour*, the vacuously agreeable Bertie Wilton. Thus, of Romer the husband his creator says, "Apparently cool and matter of fact, he was in reality a reticent fanatic." And as for Valentia his wife, she is the nearest thing in Ada Leverson's books to an "immoral"—at any rate an unprincipled—woman: playing with two fires at once, and knowing it. This situation between the trio reaches danger points that are dramatic—almost melodramatic; and only at "the limit" (beyond, even, the "twelfth hour") is the marriage saved from wreckage by three factors: that Romer, the husband, behaves though with violence, with nobility; that Harry the lover is revealed at last to Valentia as a creature lacking all profundity; and that Valentia herself, once her all too silent husband's devotion is splendidly disclosed, has still sufficient love in her, and honour, to react passionately in his favour.

Decidedly, this book is more imperfect than some others: the "plot" creaks at times, with "coincidences" rather nonchalantly contrived; there is even, most unusually for Ada Leverson, some padding; and the final resolution, though effective and credible psychologically, seems hurried and "theatrical" (the last words of the book, one feels, should be not THE END but CURTAIN). Nor are the secondary characters so assured: there are a "funny" American and a "funny" Belgian who are not so very; though Mrs. Wyburn, Romer's mother, is a splendidly-drawn monster ("Eagerness, impatience, love of teasing and sharp wit were visible in her face to one who could read between the lines"). What is happening in this book, one feels, is that the writer is stepping boldly outside her usual range (almost like her heroine, Valentia) to see just what will happen: thus attaining, as an artist, to her own "limit" of naturally manageable theme. So that though one may "fault" *The Limit*, there is little doubt that writing it enabled Ada Leverson, in the next books, to profit by the wider experience it gave her and develop, within her natural artistic boundaries, situations and characters of greater complexity and depth.

Yet it is only by the standard of other books that *The Limit* can be judged a failure. For I have left un-praised those scores, literally, of minor joys of commentary and description by which Ada Leverson constantly delights us. From among these I select two aphorisms, to illustrate in what way these rarely are, with her, mere paradoxes (mere inversions of the commonsensical obvious) as is so often, with writers considered "wittier," most tediously the case:

> It is an infallible sign of the second-rate in nature and intellect to make use of everything and everyone.
>
> The marvellous instinct with which women are usually credited seems too often to desert

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them on the only occasions when it would be of any real use. One would say it was there for trivialities only, since in a crisis they are usually dense, fatally doing the wrong thing. It is hardly too much to say that most domestic tragedies are caused by the feminine intuition of men and the want of it in women.

I ONLY PAUSE to recall the fifth book, *Bird of Paradise*, whose chief and terrible theme is the consequence of "marrying for money." I do so largely for reasons of space, and partly because the writer is marking time, so to speak, in this last novel but one, as she gathers strength before her final triumph; and I come now to the three Edith Ottley books, for which the writing of the others, each in turn, may seem in retrospect to be a preparation. These Edith Ottley novels (numbers two, four, and six in sequence) are *Love's Shadow*, *Tenterhooks*, and *Love at Second Sight*; and by their understanding and perfection they are the chief demonstration of the writer's art and vision.

To consider how much Edith really is (as I have suggested) a self-portrait of the writer, or a portrait of the kind of woman that she most admired. As to the second, this is certain; both because of Edith Ottley's central position in the canon, and because as a character she is more firmly and fully defined than any other. As to the first, we may safely assume that in describing Edith and her husband Bruce and their two children, Ada Leverson is drawing on experience that was closest and most personal to her. Though I should make clear that while Edith emerges finally as a woman the reader cannot but admire, she is presented as being fallible, however much endearing; nor is there any note whatever of that kind of auto-projection by which inferior writers manifestly seek, in their creation of a "heroine," to justify themselves in fancy to themselves in fact.

To understand the "problem" of Edith's marriage, and to assess the rightness of the way by which, in the last book of the three, she ultimately "solves" it, we must first understand her husband Bruce and their two children, Archie and Dilly. We have all met Bruce (though nowhere so accurately pinned down as in these volumes): he is the utterly selfish, utterly irresponsible, self-pitying and self-admiring bore who nevertheless does have the quality of attracting friends, and even the fidelity of his closest relatives, because of a bland, blind, total unawareness of how terrible he is. He is a "natural," an adult infant and—as everyone except himself observes—potentially a victim. The Bruces of this world may summon to their persons, as does sharp pins a magnet, emotions of exasperation and contempt: but they also effortlessly contrive to win affection, devotion, protection, even pity. (Bruce was also—as such men often are—a beau.) As for the two children, it is clear from the outset that Edith undemandingly adores them; and that their young existence is a chief cement of a marriage otherwise bereft of love—not for the conventional reason that "having children" must mean "settling down," but because of the constant thought in Edith's watchful brain of what might be the consequence to them if her marriage were allowed to become publicly the failure it already is in fact. The force of this sentiment the writer in part makes manifest by the rare feat of creating, in the infant son and daughter—first as babies then as growing children—characters in their own right (not merely foils to their parents) that are entirely convincing and most lovable: a rare feat because to see children much as they see themselves—and even to describe babies as they may be supposed to do so too—is one, in adult writing, that is as frequently attempted as it is most uncommonly achieved without embarrassment.

In *Love's Shadow* the tone is light. The Bruce-Edith dialogues (delicious in print, but oh how dreadful they would be in fact!) are purest fun. Edith, a young wife as yet, is still at the stage of putting up with much too much and letting Bruce pontificate and get (apparently) his "way." These two key personages are also introduced most subtly to this first book in which the reader meets them, as subsidiary characters—the main "intrigue" being elsewhere: they are still so far—as everyone in the novel calls them —"the little Ottleys:" at present acting as a comic foil to the major, but much more conventional "drama," of the apparent heroine Hyacinth Verney, of her adoringly jealous friend Anne Yeo, of her vapid lover Cecil Reeve, and of the (not unamiable) *femme fatale* of Cecil's vacillating predilection, Mrs. Eugenia Raymond (whose presence is, in Cecil's fresh love for Hyacinth, "love's shadow"—though we may come to feel it is over Edith that the darker shadow really looms). And since the courtship of Hyacinth by Cecil takes up much more of the book than does the brief description of their ensuing marriage, there is contrasted to the mere drama of marrying, the much more important drama (always, to Ada Leverson), in Edith and Bruce's case, of being married.

Of Bruce absurd, we have such episodes as his convenient proclivity, in moments of tiresome stress, for falling self-sorrowingly ill, and of his running the remarkable temperature—so he declares—of 119° Fahrenheit. We also hear much of Bruce's never-written (nor even begun) play, whose triumph will restore his fortunes (and buttress his immense self-satisfaction).

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Bruce, who works (or rather, doesn't) at the Foreign Office, has of course no notion of what "writing a play" means; and this enables Ada Leverson to mount a pointed satire on the attitude to art of the non-artist dilettante. There are adequate hints, too, that Bruce's rich fund of egotism will eventually—as indeed it later does—become monstrously destructive, even wicked. A prescient sentence (though in fact referring to Hyacinth and Cecil) may herald the deep injury that Bruce, in later books, will do to Edith:

> As a rule the person found out in a betrayal of love holds, all the same, the superior position of the two. It is the betrayed one who is humiliated.[4]

IN *Tenterhooks*, the second Edith Ottley book (and the reader will no longer need an explanation of the novels' titles), the drama is laid bare, though only provisionally resolved. It opens with a ludicrous—and faintly macabre—episode (that I long to see one day filmed) in which Bruce is conducting Edith to a dinner party given by a Foreign Office colleague, and gets the address wrong; taking her, in increasingly outraged frustration, and with mounting anxiety and hysteria (all Londoners will sympathise with Bruce a little), to 168 Hamilton Place, Park Lane (which turns out to be Lord Rosenberg's, with a butler and "four powdered footmen"), to 168 Hamilton Gardens (a deserted tenement in Marylebone), and to 168 Hamilton Terrace, St. John's Wood—where they arrive at a quarter-to-ten to find the party was the evening before. This comic first chapter shows three significant things, though: Edith is both more resigned, and yet more brusque, with Bruce; she still respects marriage, but no longer her husband simply because he is her partner in it; and that the Ottleys are this time presented, from the outset, with the authority of chief characters.

Vincy (in full, Vincy Wenham Vincy) is next introduced as Edith's confidant and friend: and the clear definition that he is no more than this (and that neither he nor she wish it to be otherwise) prepares us for the introduction of the third (apart from the children) essential character in Edith's life—Aylmer Ross, who soon loves her and awakes her love. Aylmer enters the book—and Edith's existence—so decisively and powerfully that the reader is at once certain this is no Bertie, Harry, or Cecil, as before, but the essential man who will combine the qualities that Edith (and her creator) seek in their ideal figure of the husband-lover; and since Edith's devotion to her marriage is known to be so absolute, the question at once assails the reader's mind (as it was no doubt intended to) as to whether and how the writer will contrive, within her own now well-defined concept of what marriage is, and what its obligations, to unite Edith with Aylmer, or whether the conflict of love and honour (rather than "duty") will perhaps destroy her.

IN THIS BOOK, AT LAST, the central theme (because the protagonists are now worthy of it) is confronted boldly. And although, for quite logical reasons of the characters' psychology, no "affair" outside marriage does actually take place, the sexual dilemma of the heroine is now brought frankly into the open. It is not that the writer loses any of the reticence about this that is natural to her and which was, in earlier books, appropriate to their lighter or more superficial tone and characters: the fact of sex is not, I mean, unnecessarily projected—used merely to heighten "drama." But it is present now, and stated: both by what the characters are made to say, and by the injection of an element of physical violence that is directly related to the revealed realities of the chief characters' desires. Thus, for the first time in the novels, we have scenes of physical assault (though not reaching their "culmination") when Aylmer embraces Edith, and even Bruce "uses force." Edith herself is also driven by her feelings into coquetry, at moments "provoking" Aylmer almost as if she were an inferior person like Valentia of *The Limit*; and in her rejoinders to her husband, speaking with undisguised tartness that barely veils (from the reader, if not from obtuse Bruce) a threat of infidelity. All three of them are now "on the brink:" wife, lover, and even husband: for Bruce, who of course supposes that any intrigue by a "devoted married man" (such as himself) is not one, and who, like so many "good sorts," is an inveterate flirt, involves himself first with his children's governess (which Edith, as much by style as by a consciousness of her own faithlessness of heart if not yet of fact, forgives), and then decisively deserts her in favour of one Mavis Argles. To Aylmer Ross the lover, this desertion seems (as it might well, initially, to the reader) the perfectly honourable (and socially acceptable) pretext for Edith to leave her husband, sue for divorce and marry him: for realising that Edith's love can only be

[4] I must not leave this book without quotation of yet another instance of Ada Leverson's prophetically critical acumen: this time of a figure whom, one might suppose, a "cultivated Edwardian" would unreservedly admire. As will be seen, her estimate in fact is of the 1960s (*avant-garde*): "Then he remembered that it was an exhibition of Max Beerbohm's caricatures, and that people's spirits were naturally raised at the sight of cruel distortions, ridiculous situations, and fantastic misrepresentations of their friends and acquaintances on the walls."

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fully given within a totally embracing vow, and being himself a man of such quality as despises, in the case of anyone he values and respects, a mere "affair," Aylmer longs now to marry her. But it was Bruce's all unconscious master-stroke to elope with somebody like Mavis Argles, and do so to, of all places, Australia. For Edith knows better than he does that the adventure will be a failure (Mavis in fact "gets off" with someone else while still on the high seas), that he will return, and that if she abandons him he will not just be the failure that he is, but shrink into a ruin. So she rejects her freedom—and her love.

Love's agony, and jealousy, and pain in joy are present in *Tenterhooks* to such effect that those who, being in love, may read it, had better not, and those who have been, but are not now, will sharply be reminded of what they may think they have forgotten. The temperature of emotion rises steadily in the book until it stands unbearably (somewhat like Bruce's) at its fever heat. To convey this accumulated tension by quotation is of course impossible: here, nevertheless, are two brief extracts that may induce a painful twinge of recollection:

> Then there was an extraordinary pause, in which neither of them seemed able to think of anything to say. There was a curious sort of vibration in the air.

> You don't know a woman until you have had a letter from her.

WITH THE FINAL book, *Love at Second Sight*, it is clear that the writer has committed herself to re-shaping Edith's life in terms satisfactory to Edith herself, to the writer's clearly enunciated code, and to the reader's heightened expectations. How, short of some sudden death or dire fatality—neither of which, the reader may rightly feel, would be appropriate—is she to accomplish this? The answer will be that with entire credibility and consummate art, she will transform Aylmer, the lover, into the "husband" whom, to win Edith, he must first become: not, I mean, "husband" merely in fact, but in psychological reality.

To achieve this, we see, first of all, how the two earlier Edith Ottley books (and more tangentially, the three others) will serve their purpose. Edith is now thirty-five, Aylmer forty-two, so it is "now or never." They have been entirely separated, since Edith's earlier rejection of him, by three years of time, during which their feeling has not waned but deepened. Bruce has learned nothing, is more dreadfully himself than ever—so much so that, to anyone who had not read of his earlier behaviour to her, it would seem from his attitude to Edith that she has nothing to forgive him. The children are older, and are beginning to see through their father. The 1914 War (as I hinted earlier) is also pressed organically into service: for while Bruce has not joined the New Army (he suffers from a "neurotic heart"), Aylmer, disguising his age, has gone to the Front and—doubly subtle touch—his son by a first marriage, Teddy, also disguising his (he is under-age to fight), is in khaki too; and the social tensions of the war will favour any drastic personal re-adjustment:

> When a woman knows that the man she loves has risked his life, and is only too anxious to risk it again—well, it's natural that she should feel she is also willing to risk something.

And yet:

> She had a curious sense of responsibility towards Bruce, which came in the way.

The means to the final union of Edith and Aylmer (though not the essential reason), and the catalyst of the whole situation, is one of Ada Leverson's most original, appalling, and hilarious creations, Mme. Eglantine Frabelle. Mme. Frabelle (English, but the relict of a French wine merchant) is a woman who gets everything wrong, never stops saying so, but who is so affably and so predictably mistaken, and so unfeignedly interested in whoever, at that moment, is her interlocutor, that everybody (except, significantly, Aylmer and Edith's boy Archie) likes her.

> People were not charmed with Eglantine because she herself was charming, but because she was charmed.

She has descended on the Ottleys with a letter of introduction from a friend who, it later transpires, knows nothing whatever about her—and indeed, once Mme. Frabelle has settled like a benevolent cuckoo in the Ottley's house, this friend asks *them* to tell her who this woman she introduced into their midst, may be. Bruce, flattered by her attention (despite her being older than he, and far from beautiful—or perhaps even because of this), is quite enchanted with her indefatigable solicitude. And so, in a different way, is Edith: for when in doubt—as she is often, now—a conversation with her guest will serve to resolve perplexities because of Edith's faith in Eglantine's sure instinct for giving to any question an answer unfailingly and reliably incorrect. For example:

> "Oh, men are all alike!" exclaimed Madame Frabelle cynically.
>
> "Only some men," said Edith. "Besides, to a woman—I mean, a nice woman—there is no such thing as men. There is a man; and either she is so fond of him that she can talk of nothing else, however unfavourably, or so much in love with

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him that she never mentions his name."

"Men often say women are all alike," said Madame Frabelle.

"When a man says that, he means there is only one woman in the world, and he's in love with her, and she is not in love with him."

"Men are not so faithful as women," remarked Madame Frabelle, with the air of a discovery.

So Mme. Frabelle provides, initially, the atmosphere of almost crazy unreality in which reality can best declare itself. Meanwhile, Edith's visits to Aylmer, who is wounded and on leave in London, become increasingly tense and desperate. The word love, and the fact of it, are now openly declared between them. And so are even —though in conversations not with Aylmer, but with one of Edith's confidants, Sir Tito Landi, the composer—the possible facts of infidelity, of divorce, of second marriage. Two sharp hints of what will happen are when Archie, Edith's son, says to her, "Mother, I wish Aylmer was my father." And obliquely, when Edith is leaving London on a visit, her husband bids her his farewell with

> "Perhaps we shall never meet again," said Bruce pleasantly, as Edith, Dilly, and the nurse were starting; "either the Zeppelins may come while you're away, or they may set your hotel at Eastcliff on fire. Just the place for them."

The visit to Eastcliff is of course (and of course with Bruce's indifferent agreement) to see Aylmer, who is convalescing there; and during it, Edith at last commits herself. Aylmer is soon to return to the war in France; and Edith tells him she will leave Bruce—who, they both accurately assess, will not want to keep the children (too much bother)—and henceforth they are, in their own eyes and hearts, "engaged." In this almost final scene, the writer establishes two essential things: that Edith, sure of his love and hers, and sure as she can be of the children's future, is prepared to "desert" her husband and accept "social disgrace;" and that in spite of the urgencies of their feeling for each other, and of the overhanging war, neither he nor she wish for physical union until they can be pledged entirely to each other.

And now Mme. Frabelle plays from afar (in fact, from Liverpool) the unexpected and unhoped for final card that will give Edith not only the whole game, but game with honours. For Mme. Frabelle is waiting to cross the Atlantic, and Bruce is going to cross it with her: this time, we know, in a grasp far more irrevocable than Mavis Argles'. On his earlier flight with Mavis, Bruce had announced it to his wife by letter; but now her lingering doubt will not be satisfied with less than an avowal from her husband. This—as necessary psychologically to both Bruce and Edith, as artistically to the writer —Bruce provides her with: and tells her face to face why it is "I can't endure married life any longer." The last link breaks finally when Edith, accepting this (not on this occasion as we know, without relief) asks Bruce if he would wish to see their child Dilly before he goes. He doesn't want to; and she no longer wants him in any way at all.

In this book, the chief themes of all her art are finally united and resolved: friendship, love, and honour become one. Technically, it is her most perfect: even the decorative chapter headings of the earlier five books have vanished in the assured pace with which she sets down her final testament. Two decades of Ada Leverson's life remained to her, but she never wrote another novel; and one may conjecture this was most because the meaning that life held for her had now been given, in her art, entire expression.

ON THE EVIDENCE of these books, we now see clearly defined what Ada Leverson most admired in men and women, and most disliked; and can so deduce, from the consistency with which she reveals these attitudes through her characters' sayings and behaviour, what is the nature of the essentially moral instinct on which her whole outook as an artist was ultimately based. One may say first of all, on the positive side, that she loved those who loved life, who were spirited yet considerate and kind, and that she liked good manners (while caring nothing whatever for conventional "status"). She adored the young (including the special category of children), and she admired poised old age. She liked women as well as men (whom she liked even more), and to both she could give friendship, of which she well knew the boundaries, as well as she could give love (of which she knew all the rareness and the peril and the need for nourishing it with absolute devotion). She liked people who did things, but didn't mind when they did nothing if they did it with style. She respected most of all men and women who, involving themselves in a human situation, take their due share of responsibility, and try to preserve it and enrich it.

She disliked the mean, the self-important, the tale-bearers, and those lacking candour when to withhold it can do damage: though she disliked equally the indiscreet, and the superfluously "outspoken." She despised duplicity, but did not mind artifice. Most of all, I think—and this is perhaps the only cardinal sin in Ada Leverson's indulgent and forgiving code—she detested cruelty, especially when wanton and aware. Yet almost all these blemishes she was ready enough to pardon, or to make allowances for, if the

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culprit—as culprits often are—was really unconscious of his fault.

In its simplest essence, one may say of her vision that it is—though this is an odd word to use—a healthy one: where life glowed, there her heart was, and her active sympathy. Although, as a writer, she is "worldly" (in the sense of knowing precisely what the rules are), she emerges from her pages as an artist who, however knowledgeable and difficult to deceive, is innocent and pure. To her readers—even to her characters . . . and even to the most dreadful among these—she is like a fairy godmother: eager to bestow gifts; courteous and considerate to her public, and too good-natured, often, even to hurt her own creations when they most deserve it. Really to know life, and to accept it —while always wishing it were better and striving, in one's own human relations, to make it so—and once knowing it, to grow to love it more and more in spite of its conditions, is the indication in any human person of maturity and wisdom. Such a person Ada Leverson was, and of this kind of being all her writing is a celebration.

In *The Twelfth Hour*, Felicity, during a moment of doubt about her marriage and herself, consults a female Celtic soothsayer (called Madame Zero) who thus reveals Felicity's own character to her:

> You have a curious temperament. You are easily impressed by the personality of other people. You are impulsive and emotional, and yet you have a remarkable amount of calm judgment, so that you can analyse, and watch your own feelings and those of the other persons as well as if it were a matter of indifference to you. Your strong affections never blind you to the faults and weaknesses of their object, and those faults do not make you care for them less, but in some cases attach you even more strongly. You are fond of gaiety; your moods vary easily, because you vibrate to music, bright surroundings, and sympathy. But you have depth, and in an emergency I should say you would be capable even of heroism.

Edith Ottley, three times a heroine, may best seem, as we now know, to personify—in so far as any character does, or can, its own creator—the woman Ada Leverson felt herself to be. Yet may not this short description—a fragment from the picture of the first heroine she invented and admired—be also her earliest self-portrait? Certainly, it evokes a woman who, after one has read her books and learned what she loved and didn't, one may grow to believe was very like her indeed.

A Kind of Love

My father toiled at sleek machines,
his sweat mixing with their oil
so we boys would not grow thin.
At night, pained with need of sleep,
he smiled at the door and kneeled
to circle us with heavy arms
and rub his dark bristled cheek
against our faces while we yelled.
We, who had alleyways and streets
beneath the dark track of the el
on which to play our noisy games,
we thought it duty for this man
to love; in our innocence
we did not know his pain of sleep,
In our tireless play we did not think
he worked in hate to earn our keep.

Wally Kaufman

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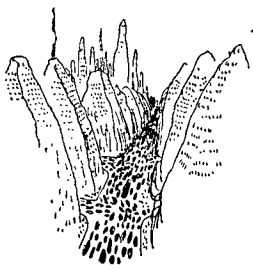
NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from New York

Explaining Ourselves



ALL of a sudden, some of my best friends are "socialists." (I'll explain those inverted commas very shortly.) This is a new phenomenon among New York "intellectuals." (I'll *not* explain those inverted commas —after all, I have to live with these people.) At three successive cocktail parties I have heard various men of letters roundly proclaim that they have lapsed into socialism, and that so far from experiencing an "end of ideology" they were conscious of a new beginning. No one fainted at these announcements; to tell the truth no one paid much heed. But I call this development to your attention so that you'll know what is *chic* with us, and also because aberrations may sometimes tell us more about the norm than can the norm itself.

I use the word "aberration" advisedly, but with no desire to be unusually malicious. I am myself not a socialist, and can't honestly begin to understand what it might mean to be a socialist in the United States, *anno* 1961, where the Government Post Office is a daily scandal while the privately-owned (though publicly-regulated) telephone system is a model for all the world. Nor are my friends of much help in enlightening me. For at least some of the more middle-aged among them (to put the matter delicately), socialism seems to be a moral equivalent for adultery—a last desperate flight from the respectability that comes with rising incomes and falling hair. Most of these people are profoundly a-political; they have visited Paris far more frequently than Washington; their ignorance of economics, or public administration, or foreign affairs is vast. Their socialism is little more than a nostalgic posture, and my own feeling is that, if this is the price one must pay for preserving the sanctity of their families, it is reasonably cheap.

But such people are not the whole story. For among the young in body, as well as in heart, there are scattered symptoms of a radical revival. It is evident in the rash of little Left-wing magazines that have broken out in the colleges. It is perceptible, too, in the pages of such a magazine as *Commentary*, which under its new editor (aged 31) has encouraged younger contributors with a dissenting cast of mind. It was in *Commentary* that a young professor recently wrote an article calling (favourable) attention to the "rebelling young scholars" who are now openly challenging the conventional wisdom (liberal or neo-liberal, usually) of their teachers. This article certainly exaggerates the proportions of its subject—the overwhelming majority of American students still have only one thing on their minds. But it is not entirely fanciful. There may be no thunder on the Left; but there are some barely audible rumblings.

I HAVE BEEN READING some of these new student publications—*New University Thought*, *Studies on the Left*, etc.—and I do not recommend that you rush to enter your subscriptions. None of them comes close to the level of your own *New Left Review*, which does after all have a genuine socialist tradition to work within. True, when an issue is nice and simple, such as supporting Negro students in the South in their campaign of civil disobedience against segregated schools, movie houses, and restaurants, these young radicals speak decisively as well as fervently. But the struggle against racial discrimination in this country is not a Left-wing property; the affluent foundations, the political machines in the Northern cities, the educated class as a whole, are all on the same side. And when these young people stray into other, and more deeply troubled waters, they flounder wildly. They are against the arms race, but are not for unilateral disarmament either; they object to "Yankee imperialism" but can't seriously admire Dr. Castro; they are pro-Israel (many of them are Jewish) and also pro-Nasser (all of them are "anti-colonialist"); they are for friendly relations with the Soviet Union but cannot really bring themselves to admire a régime that is so patently illiberal. So, more often than not, they exhaust their spleen by constructing vague and grand demonologies in which "the ruling élite" is denounced for so mucking up the world that a decent radical has the greatest difficulty in making sense of it.

Basically, these young people are trapped in a peculiarly American dilemma: how to be a radical without becoming a crank. This is not a uniquely Left-wing problem; it holds for Right-wing radicalism as well. Concurrent with the "socialist" ripples on the campus there has also been a "conservative" revival of sorts. (Once again, those inverted commas are indispensable.)

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In the last election, a poll showed the faculty of Princeton University voting overwhelmingly for Kennedy, the students almost as overwhelmingly for Nixon; the new president of Harvard's student council is an avowed "conservative"; organisations with titles like the *Intercollegiate Society of Individualists* or *Young Americans for Freedom* are active and influential; etc. *Time* magazine regularly keeps us informed of goings-on in this group—but, significantly, does so in a tone that keeps them at arm's length. For *Time*, a mass circulation magazine, must necessarily keep within the mainstream of American life. And "conservatism" is no more in this mainstream than is "socialism." It, too, is condemned to irrelevance; and just as the Left-wingers, out of sheer frustration, will find themselves uttering the kind of anti-American sentiments usually reserved for *Pravda*, so the Right-wingers discover themselves flirting willy-nilly with crackpot economics or anti-Semitism.

THE BASIC FACT of American political thought is that, for a century and a half, it has been dominated by a liberal orthodoxy so massive, and yet so flexible, that one can escape from it only at the risk of severe mental and psychological unbalance. This orthodoxy is not easy to define in a summary way, but I should say that its salient characteristics are: (1) it is uninhibitedly committed to modernity—that is, to the perpetual transformation of society by scientific and technological innovation; and (2) it defines the "pursuit of happiness" in utterly non-political terms—which is to say, its politics are ordinarily subservient to the private individual's private satisfactions. These two fundamental American theses, between them, effectively make both "conservatism" (with its pathos of the past) and "socialism" (with its quest for community) foreign elements in the body politic—exotic imports to a country big enough for them to get lost in. They also make American politics a great bore for the American intellectual. As is bound to be the case under any such orthodoxy, political journalism is approved, but anything resembling political theory—any speculation on first principles—is suspect; selfless devotion to the common good is applauded, but only so long as it is the common conception of the common good—selfless devotion to an uncommon idea of the common good is a sign of "extremism." All of which means that, in the American democracy, the intellectual who develops passionate convictions or far-reaching ideas about politics will come up against a wall of blank incomprehension and will probably veer off into eccentricity.

THIS IS NOT GOOD FOR THE INTELLECTUALS; and it is not good for America either. For when, as now, our nation faces a challenge, not only to its existence but to the very principles of its existence, it finds itself dangerously inarticulate. The comic efforts to overcome this inarticulateness—through a Presidential commission on "national goals," or prize essays that would define our "national purpose," or soppy generalities about "the American way of life"—all these only emphasise the difficulty. America is not in need of any ideology to set up against Marxism; God forbid that it should ever fabricate, or be dominated by one. But it is in need of political (one might even say philosophical) self-consciousness—it needs to know itself, to understand itself, to have a detached insight into itself as a democracy and an imperial power. The typical journalistic or quasi-sociological exposé, whatever its particular merits, does not really help. In the end it becomes a mere titillation, a self-reproach which is a source of self-satisfaction: Messrs. C. Wright Mills and Vance Packard are a part of the American entertainment industry, not of American politics. Nor is "socialist" or "conservative" rhetoric-mongering of much use. It seems singularly futile to try to transplant these doctrines—echoes of a history America has never experienced, offshoots of a class conflict America has never known—to our shores just when they are beginning to wither away in their homelands.

It is clear, or ought to be, that unquestioning acceptance of the American liberal orthodoxy cannot survive the end of American isolation. We now, for the first time, have to explain ourselves to a world that does not accept us on our own terms. To do this, we shall have to explain ourselves to ourselves. This is infinitely harder than indulging in petulant, wilful criticism; and it is, oddly enough, about as un-American as un-American can be.

Irving Kristol

Strachey's Cry

JOHN STRACHEY, it seems to me, misses the chief interest and point of the literature of ex-Communism when he insists on accepting Communist pretensions to rationality. For the surprising fact—of concern to the clinician as well as the political theorist—is that ex-Communism usually represents not a "retreat from rationalism" [ENCOUNTER, Nov. and Dec.] but a passage from one form of Romanticism to another.

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Bolshevism, from the earliest years of its rupture with living Marxism, has been a wilful, mercurial, dogmatic, anti-rational movement tied to the Enlightenment only by a dwindling handful of Jacobin phrases. It is a movement in which incantation has nearly always mattered more than empirical analysis. Lenin's approach to Historical Materialism was uniquely long on History (the mystic, Hegelian, upper-case kind) and short on Materialism (the sociological Marx of *Das Capital*, the Engels of the later years). His debt to Bakunin, Nechayev, Tkachev, and other Russian mystics of revolution has been amply documented by now, as has the repudiation of him long before the revolution by the most distinguished Marxist theoreticians and economists of the original Bolshevik faction (Plekhanov, Woytinsky, the Bogdanov brothers, etc.). In his polemics against the "Economists" and Menshevik "Liquidators" before the Revolution, as in his approach to the Workers' Opposition and the Kronstadt rebels later on, he manifested a political style, dominated by vindictiveness and a personalised sectarianism, which was anti-Marxist, anti-labour, and anti-rational.

If to-day one jettisons the years of Trotskyite and Stalinist apologetics for the Revolution itself, and considers coolly Lenin's course in power, one is struck again and again by patent absurdities. Not only the chicanery of such episodes as the Brest-Litovsk negotiations; not only the mistaken assessments of the course of the war and the German revolution; but, indeed, the fundamental illogicality of the main lines of Bolshevik policy. The New Economic Policy, for example, on which Lenin finally determined in 1921—with its emphasis on the "middle" peasant, light industry, co-operatives, private trade, foreign investment, co-existence with the West—all this was a programme on which Lenin could have joined with the other socialist parties in 1917. Such a programme might have spared Russia the horrors of Red and White Terror, civil war, foreign intervention, famine and epidemic, and thus more surely have advanced industrialisation, socialism, the working class, and even world revolution than the course Lenin actually followed. But—and this is the very kernel of Bolshevik irrationality—such a programme in 1917 would have offered no excuse for one-faction dictatorship over a people who were already (as the Constituent Assembly election showed) four-fifths Socialist in orientation. One could cite other examples, but they boil down to this: If one genuinely believes that capitalism is a passing stage of economic development which must give way to socialist forms of organisation, it is sheer Romance to insist that only a single group of men are qualified to assist, or bring about, the transformation.

Mr. Strachey will now agree, I am sure, that Stalin's approach to Marxism and socialism was even more capricious than Lenin's. Those who followed him in the Western world were responding not to reason, but to power, violence, resentment cloaked in the mystique of the "dialectic." Reason commended the Swedish, not the Soviet example. In its emotional appeal as well as its manners, Communism resembled social democracy and Enlightenment liberalism far less than it did Nazism—another destructive fury aimed at the self-satisfied liberal order. This similarity of emotional appeal explains why neither movement could come to power anywhere except by force of arms and after the most appalling national catastrophes. It explains why the two movements could combine so effectively to destroy the German Republic in 1933, and to launch the world in 1939 on a war that cost twenty-three million lives. It explains why Communism, like Nazism, attracted so few serious, creative, productive philosophers, historians, economists and social planners, and so many unstable, narcissistic members of the *lumpen*-intelligentsia. Bertrand Russell is said to have remarked a decade ago that the only serious Communists in the world were in Russia—that is, the serious Soviet people who *had* to deal with and through the Party—while foreign Communists, who had joined up voluntarily, were mostly "cranks." And if in their Communism they were dogmatic or sentimental, ruthless or submissive, cynical or anxious, jesuitical or crude—these human (and political) qualities did not altogether vanish with their apostasy.

ORWELL HIMSELF, as Mr. Strachey notes, does not belong in this company at all. His own work in the field is not really about Communism as such, but about the 20th century which produced it and other horrors. *Nineteen Eighty Four* was not set in Russia but in England, and stated clearly that America was in similar straits. It is not a warning about the "Communist threat to the West" (if it were, there would be more in it about how the Party took power in the West) or about any threats posed by British democratic socialism (Mr. Strachey is too sensitive). It is a book which should be bracketed with *The Meritocracy*, not with *Witness*. It is, in short, about the dehumanisation of life by rampant technology, urbanisation, statism, mass communication, "behavioural science," and—by no means last—the cold war. (It was the sham war between the various Air Strips which served as justification for the corruptions practised in

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each.) Orwell is making—pessimistically—somewhat the same point made hopefully by Louis Halle in speaking of the ultimate "convergence" of the Soviet and Western systems, and made objectively by George Kennan in describing totalitarianism as a disease which infects us all to some degree.

What so many of the ex-Communists still influential in the West share with present-day Communists is an over-valuation of the centrality of Communism, ex-Communism and anti-Communism in the development of our civilisation. They have been so taken by the Communist "challenge" that they overlook the large extent to which it has been and continues to be an essentially negative response to our own failings—of which, as Mr. Dulles demonstrated, an obsessive anti-Communism may be one.

Mr. Strachey disclaims that Communism is the "*only* thing that matters," but he appears to show only a ritual interest in the myriad of historical problems that ante-date Communism (city and farm, metropolis and colonies, nationalism and supranationalism, etc.) or post-date it (emphatically, the Bomb). He says that "to fail to take Communism with the utmost seriousness is still almost as disastrous a mistake as to take Communism hysterically," but that is surely a Newspeak sentence (the word "almost" is a study in itself). Obviously, one man's "utmost seriousness" is another man's "hysteria" and vice versa.

For me, the question now is whether all these historical problems, old and new, may be approached for their own sake and in their own terms—or must be subordinated, politically and morally, to some grand strategy of anti-Communism. Mr. Strachey seeks a "potentially fruitful tension" with Communist values, but there is some ground for belief that we have had quite enough "tension" with Hitlerite and Leninist values, and lost much in the exchange. I would hope that the time has at last come when we may begin to re-discover our own values, purposes, ideals, and reason. Then, perhaps, with plans in hand, we may see the Communist problem in a clearer light.

Anatole Shub

London Commentary

The Future of Public Ownership

By C. A. R. Crosland

THE doctrinal uproar over Clause 4 having at last subsided, we can now consider, empirically and dispassionately, the proper role of public ownership and the practical programme which a reformist Labour Party might adopt. Historically, the Left has sought more public ownership for two reasons: first, from a desire to control the use to which *particular* capital assets were put and hence to nationalise particular firms or industries; secondly, from the belief that public ownership *in general*, in whatever direction and by whatever means, was a pre-condition of building a new social order embodying Socialist ideals.

The particular reasons for wanting control have, as Mr. Weiner shows in a recent book,[1] varied through time, being concerned successively with the problems of land values, public utilities, private monopoly, reorganisation of the basic industries, and planning for full employment. But common to all has been the unquestioning assumption that, because control rested absolutely on ownership, a compulsory change in ownership was the only way of achieving the end in view.

This assumption is no longer correct; hence the confusion on the Left about the future of nationalisation. First, the Government's global control over the economy has greatly increased as a result not only of the nationalisation of most of the basic industries, but still more of its own vastly expanded economic activity; it now

[1] *British Labour and Public Ownership*. By HERBERT WEINER. Stevens, 25s.

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directly controls nearly 50 per cent of total national investment and 30 per cent of total national spending. Secondly, it has also, over the last two decades, developed numerous selective methods of controlling particular private firms or industries—discriminating taxes or subsidies, legislative action (as over restrictive practices or the location of industry), selective physical or financial controls (as over hire-purchase), the exploitation of its power as a final buyer, and generally the uninhibited use (often most effective) of bullying, cajolery, and political pressure. In consequence, many traditional Labour objectives (for example, full employment), to the fulfilment of which further large-scale nationalisation would at one time have been thought essential, either have been or manifestly could be achieved with the existing degree of public ownership and control.

Of course a Conservative Government will often use these new powers in a sloppy and half-hearted fashion, or with the wrong (from a socialist standpoint) end in view. And of course we shall periodically need fresh controls to meet fresh problems. We already, for example, need stronger government control over large-scale mergers and take-over bids. These should be much more closely scrutinised than they now are, not simply because they may lead to an undue degree of industrial concentration (that could be checked by an expanded Monopolies Commission), but because they increasingly involve important social and political considerations. It may not much matter whether detergents are produced by two firms or twenty. It is quite a different question when enterprises which have a wider social function, such as the *News Chronicle* or *Daily Herald*, or Letchworth Garden City, or even the Manchester Royal Exchange, can change hands or disappear as a result of a take-over bid without the public interest being in any way consulted. We need new and far-reaching legislation here. But nationalisation will not normally be called for; in this as in other fields, a determined reforming government can now generally get its way without a change in ownership.[2]

There might, however, be one exception to this general rule: namely, where the object of control is not negatively to prevent a firm from doing something, but positively to urge it to spend more money, or at least to spend its money differently. This will be a frequent motive in Britain, where, with an abysmal rate of growth and a shaky foreign balance, it should be a constant preoccupation of government to bully backward industries into spending more on research, investment, and the development of new products. To this positive purpose, legislative controls are irrelevant; for one cannot compel a firm to spend its shareholders' money contrary to its own wishes. Nationalisation may then be the only answer.

It would not normally take the form of old-style monopoly nationalisation. This would certainly be a political liability, at least until a future Labour Government had converted the existing nationalised industries (especially the railways) into showpiece industries enjoying universal acclaim and popularity. It would also be unnecessary; for the object could usually be attained by selective or competitive public enterprise. That is, the Government would acquire or establish one or more individual firms in an industry; and these would be expected, by the force of example and competition, to galvanise the whole industry into raising its standards of research, efficiency, and innovation. Avoiding as it does the problems of vast scale and centralised monopoly, the competing public firm is an attractive notion. It is not one without practical difficulties, notably that of determining, and then justifying to the public, the choice of one firm rather than another for compulsory acquisition. This difficulty has so far been largely avoided inasmuch as most existing state companies are the result either of incomplete denationalisation (Richard Thomas and Baldwins in steel, British Road Services, the Tilling bus group) or of special war-time or political factors (Short Brothers in the aircraft industry, Renault in France, Volkswagen until it was denationalised, and the various nationalised concerns in Italy). The problem is not, however, insoluble; and the competing public enterprise will certainly have a role to play.

Yet it may often be kept as a power of last resort, for with occasional exceptions—notably housing and urban development policy, discussed later—it is in practice easier than most socialists suppose to persuade private enterprise to alter or increase its pattern of spending and investment. This can be achieved either by direct financial inducements (grants, loans, subsidies, or differential tax concessions) or by the use of the Government's power as a final buyer. Such inducements have (for example) persuaded Colvilles to build a fourth strip-mill, Cunard to replace the *Queen Mary*, the aircraft industry to concentrate into two large groups, the cotton industry to contract capacity by one-third, Ford and B.M.C. to expand on Merseyside instead of

[2] After all, it can always put a few monopolists in gaol, as capitalist America has just done. Six months in Pentonville for Mr. Cecil King and Lord Rothermere might have a powerful effect in halting the concentration of the press.

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in Dagenham and Birmingham, the farming industry continuously to alter the pattern of its output, and so on. Some of these decisions (*e.g.*, the replacement of the *Queens*) were of doubtful wisdom; but they all show the considerable power of government to influence, positively as well as negatively, the production and investment decisions of private firms.

This power should certainly be used with greater verve and determination. The Government and the nationalised industries could, for example, employ their massive buying strength more often and more ruthlessly to impose on their suppliers (as do Marks & Spencer and other large distributive organisations) the highest standards of research, design, and production organisation. Again, the Government already finances a high proportion, and should perhaps finance more, of the research undertaken in private industry; it is therefore frequently in a position to call the tune, especially in relation to the development of new products. Generally, the disposal of large public funds constitutes a planning control of great power and precision, which should be freely used to promote more rapid growth.

BUT SHOULD NOT the public then share in the resultant profits? Even though a stake in ownership is not always necessary to achieve *control*, is it not justified on grounds of *equity*? Where public aid takes the form not of a current subsidy but of a loan or grant from which new capital assets are created, the Government should surely act like any private lender and exercise the right to participate in the equity whenever (but only when) it thinks this might be profitable. For example, it should have taken a share in the equity when it made its long-term loan to Colvilles; again, it should participate fully in the profits (and not merely earn a royalty) in those cases, such as the Hovercraft or the Dracone flexible oil-barge, where a brilliant new product is the fruit of government-financed research and is then further developed by a joint public-private company. There seems no good reason why the equity profits in such cases should accrue solely to the private shareholder, and every reason of logic and justice why a due proportion should return to the taxpayer.

The result would then be a mixed enterprise or joint company. This form of ownership is quite common in other countries (*K.L.M.* is a well-known example); and it is commended by Professor Robson in his recent monumental (though rather exhausting) study, *Nationalized Industry and Public Ownership*.[3] It has manifest advantages over the state monopoly. It does not involve a sharp break in the continuity of the enterprise, with a new, artificial pattern of organisation imposed by legislation; the enterprise can grow, or continue to grow, in a natural organic manner, with beneficial effects on morale and management. It is in harmony with what should be the ultimate socialist aim, which is not an unending chain of public monopolies, but a diverse, diffused, pluralist, and heterogeneous pattern of ownership. Lastly, it is strictly relevant to the needs and conditions of the 1960s. Most of the older specific objects of nationalisation can now be achieved by government controls. The new objective is to use public money, boldly and flexibly, in a catalytic role—to increase efficiency and encourage growth. But the Government must then reserve the right to participate, whenever it thinks fit, in the subsequent rewards.

THE WIDER SOCIAL arguments for nationalisation were based on the supposition that only a predominantly socialised economy was consistent with the long-term goals of equality of wealth, workers' control, co-operative social relations, and the classless society. I discuss here only equality of wealth, since the link between ownership and the remaining goals is, in our present state of knowledge, decidedly tenuous.[4]

The distribution of wealth in Britain is inequitable mainly (though not solely) for these reasons. First, the distribution of private property is grotesquely unequal. Secondly, this inequality stems largely from inheritance rather than from savings out of current earned income. Thirdly, it tends to grow worse rather than better inasmuch as the capital gains which occur on a generous scale under conditions of full employment and economic growth accrue only to those who already own property.

THESE INEQUITIES can most quickly be corrected, not by a change in ownership, but by taxation; for this can be made to bite more deeply and more fiercely. The two most urgent requirements are a capital gains tax, and a tax on gifts *inter vivos* to restore reality to the death-duties. (At present, since money given away five years before death attracts no tax, death-duties are paid only by those who loathe their children or get run over by a bus before their time or live in so remote a region of the Highlands that news of tax avoidance has still not penetrated there.) Whereas nationalisation (with compensation) transfers only future income and

[3] Allen & Unwin, 50s.

[4] I also ignore the possible (though highly uncertain) link between ownership and the nature of our culture, since this raises issues which go far beyond the scope of this article.

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capital gains, effective death-duties transfer the existing capital as well; and whereas nationalisation transfers only those future gains which accrue in the sector actually nationalised, a capital gains tax appropriates a proportion of all gains accruing anywhere in the economy.

However, the extension of public ownership will of course also improve the distribution of wealth, though not in practice very rapidly. The object here being not government control but simply the transfer of property, it can be achieved equally by *any* form of social ownership (and indeed any method of diffusing the ownership of *private* property more widely); we are not concerned solely with ownership by the central state.

OF THE ALTERNATIVE FORMS of social ownership, the Co-operative Movement is potentially the most attractive; for it provides the additional benefits, much to be valued in our centralised, bureaucratic, and producer-dominated society, of local autonomy, member-participation, and consumer control. Unfortunately, despite brilliant successes in some spheres (such as self-service) and some localities (Nottingham, Portsmouth, Bristol), its total performance is hardly inspiring. Its share of retail trade, after stagnating at about 11 per cent for the past 25 years, has now actually begun to decline; and it has been markedly less successful than the multiples in adapting to the consumer revolution of the last decade.

The main weakness is a too literal adherence to traditional ideology. In the supposed interests of "equality and democracy," the Movement pays absurdly low salaries, recruits few University or even grammar-school personnel, permits excessive interference with management by elected lay Boards, and above all displays an intense hostility to strong, professional, national leadership. The result (with some notable exceptions) is a certain dowdiness, parochialism, and technical backwardness; and this, so far from fostering equality or democracy, merely reduces the Co-operative share of activity and hence the area over which Co-operative principles can be applied.

If the Movement could overcome these weaknesses and then generate the necessary capital and enterprise, it could fulfil an important social function far beyond the sphere of retailing and distribution. It is already a manufacturer on a considerable scale; it also controls a successful insurance company and building society. Yet there is still so much to do—so many fields where it could play a dynamic anti-commercial or pro-consumer role. It seems sad, for example, that it should be not the Co-operative Movement but a private British company (*Jet Petroleum*) and a French Company (*Total*) which have finally challenged the petrol-distribution monopoly of the large oil companies; sad that the Co-operatives did not make an early and ambitious, instead of a belated and half-hearted, attempt to break into commercial television; above all sad that, unlike many Continental countries, we have no large Co-operative sector of housing. A venturesome, progressive Co-operative Movement could, while extending the frontiers of social ownership, at the same time provide a splendid example of competitive social enterprise and a much-needed countervailing power to producer-interests.

SECONDLY, municipal ownership. The greatest single need for more public ownership, on grounds of control as well as wealth-distribution, is in the municipal field of housing and urban development. This is a field in which the free market works conspicuously badly; and the faults cannot be remedied by purely negative controls.

The housing situation is still appalling. In addition to nearly a million slum-dwellings officially declared "unfit," there are still two million sub-standard houses—cramped, ugly, squalid, without either fixed bath or running hot water. Yet replacement is not even keeping pace with obsolescence; so waiting-lists are being closed, and hundreds of thousands of older people will never be decently housed as long as they live, and of young couples will start their married lives without a separate home. Since it is unprofitable to build houses for rent in the industrial areas where they are most needed, private enterprise will never solve the problem. The only answer is at once a large increase in new municipal (and, ideally, co-operative) house-building, and the compulsory acquisition and rapid modernisation of sub-standard private rented property.

Municipal ownership also provides the only hope (though not the certainty, as Bristol has recently shown) of comprehensive re-development of our city centres. Piccadilly Circus is a case in point. The London County Council originally wished to re-develop the site as a unified whole. They could not, unfortunately, afford the enormous capital cost of doing so. They were therefore compelled to sanction piecemeal private development; hence not only the monstrosity proposed by Mr. Jack Cotton for the Monico site, but also the certainty that the huge profits to be derived from re-development would accrue solely to private speculators. Municipal ownership of urban centres is overwhelmingly justified on grounds both of coherent town-planning and of the public's right at least to the increment of land values. But,

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as with municipal housing, this possibility depends entirely on government sanction and capital aid; and these are of course not forthcoming from Mr. Henry Brooke. A Labour Government would find this an infinitely more urgent and rewarding form of public enterprise than tinkering about, as the traditionalists of the Left would have us do, with the chemical or the motor industry.

THERE ARE ALSO some trading activities which are suitable for competing municipal enterprise —restaurants (already successful in Birmingham and elsewhere), hotels, district-heating schemes, underground car-parks, and the like. And surely we want to see vastly more municipal enterprise in the arts. The present position here is almost farcical. Local authorities are empowered to spend up to a 6d. rate on music and drama; their actual support amounts to *one-tenth of a 1d. rate*! Compared with Sweden or Germany, our provision of civic theatres and opera-houses (and the extent of civic patronage of painting and sculpture) is a national disgrace.

There are numerous other public bodies which are gradually extending the area of social ownership, notably of land and property—the Forestry Commission (now the largest land-owner in Britain), the National Trust, the New Town Corporations, the Crown Land Commissioners, and so on. In some countries even the Trade Unions engage in competitive social enterprise, especially in housing. In Sweden the building Unions are responsible for a significant proportion of new housing; in the United States, too, several Unions have built new housing estates.

LASTLY, state ownership. The method here will of course not be the continuous proliferation of state monopolies on the existing pattern. This would be politically difficult, economically irresponsible (in the light of our critical balance-of-payments position and the still unresolved problems of the present nationalised industries), and in any case unnecessary to the end in view.

For the object is not to acquire *particular* capital assets with a view to their control; it is *generally* to increase the area of public ownership. There is therefore no need for the compulsory purchase of entire firms or industries; it is sufficient to extend public investment in any direction, and it makes no difference how haphazardly the investment is scattered amongst different industries. Indeed it would be a positive nuisance to be saddled with control, with all the attendant problems of management and reorganisation. Since active management is a more complex function than passive ownership, this would greatly retard the pace at which public ownership could proceed; since it is also a quite different function, the personnel and machinery which were apt for the one would be quite unsuitable for the other.

This is the rationale behind the various proposals for public share-buying. Under these proposals, the existing National Insurance Fund and a future Superannuation Fund which would follow from the introduction of a full-blooded national superannuation scheme would freely invest in equities as well as in gilt-edged. Similarly, the total cumulative yield of the death-duties would be treated as a capital receipt,

Establishment?

Questionnaires for what is described as "the most wide-ranging survey that has ever been conducted at Oxford" were sent out to 360 male undergraduates in their final year at the University yesterday. The survey is organised by the student magazine Isis.

It is hoped to discover the financial and social backgrounds of undergraduates and their parents, the careers the undergraduates intend to follow, their political and religious outlooks. their attitude to lectures and the newspapers they read. Its 36 questions have been framed by Paul Foot, 23, editor of Isis, *and Henry Scott Stokes, 22, who is editing the survey....*

As "a concession to an editorial whim" one other question is included which has nothing to do with the survey. It is a question on reading.

Four "establishment" authors and politicians, Arthur Bryant, the historian, C. P. Snow and L. P. Hartley, the novelists, and the magazine ENCOUNTER, *are named alongside four "more Left-wing," R. H. Tawney, the philosopher, George Orwell and Henry Miller, the novelists, and the magazine New Left Review.*

"I expect most people will have read the first group. I wonder just how many have read the second," says Mr. Foot.

WHAT THEY READ: THE RESULTS

	ARTS 233		SCIENCE 75	
	No.	%	No.	%
Arthur Bryant	116	50	24	32
George Orwell	211	90	63	84
C. P. Snow	114	49	43	57
ENCOUNTER	150	64	34	45
New Left Review ...	61	26	10	13
R. H. Tawney	67	29	2	3
L. P. Hartley	55	24	11	15
Henry Miller	64	27	15	20
Not read any	7	3	5	7
No answer	—	—	1	1

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, *5 Feb. and 5 Mar. 1961*

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and accrue to a new Death-Duty Fund which would again be free to invest in any kind of property.

THESE BODIES WOULD BE INDEPENDENT of the government in their day-to-day operations. They would seek solely to maximise income and capital gains on behalf of the community. For this purpose they would act like any private pension fund or insurance company, buying and selling stock in the open market, behaving as a passive shareholder, and interfering with management only when necessary to the security of their investment. If government *control* over a firm is required, it should be exercised not indirectly through the managers of these funds (who would be quite inappropriate people to exercise it), but directly from Whitehall through the normal planning machinery. The functions of control and ownership should be kept separate; the advantage of this approach is precisely that it makes possible the one without the complications of the other.

Share-buying need not, of course, be confined to the central state. The large municipalities, starting with Manchester, are already investing their pension funds in equities. Even the Trade Unions are following suit, both with their reserve and pension funds—and none too soon in the case of the former; for their past policy of gilt-edged investment, by gravely depleting the value of their reserves, has significantly weakened their capacity to endure large-scale strikes and hence their bargaining power against the employers.

SUCH DEVELOPMENTS are wholly to be desired. In every field of social ownership, the more decentralisation the better. We do not want everything to be owned in Whitehall. The ultimate aim, which alone will guarantee personal liberty and the fragmentation of power, is a thoroughly mixed-up, variegated pattern of ownership, with the state, the nationalised industries, the Co-operatives, municipalities, trade unions, pension funds, and millions of private families all participating.

THIS, THEN, is the sort of practical programme of public ownership which a radical Labour Party would adopt. It would by no means constitute the most important part of its total programme, nor would it satisfy the Clause 4 Bourbons; for it is based on the underlying assumption that ownership, while it can influence, does not uniquely *determine* the character of the society. But unlike the Utopian programmes of Left-wing traditionalists it consciously uses the means of public ownership, in a supple, flexible, and relevant manner, to achieve certain definite socialist ends.

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THEATRE

"Solemn, Interposing Puff . . ."

By Nigel Dennis

"[De Flores in The Changeling] . . . *surpasses anything I know of in the drama of domestic life."* LEIGH HUNT.

"We must go to Shakespeare for an equally original and an equally unquestionable revelation of indubitable truth." SWINBURNE.

"In the moral essence of tragedy it is safe to say that in this play Middleton is surpassed by one Elizabethan alone, and that is Shakespeare." T. S. ELIOT.

"Decidedly minor curiosity of post-Shakespearian melodrama. . . ." "MR. PUFF" IN THE "OBSERVER'S" QUICK THEATRE GUIDE.

ONE THING is beyond doubt: "Mr. Puff" has not parted company with Leigh Hunt, Swinburne, and T. S. Eliot simply to make them feel snubbed and lonely. He has spoken his mind honestly and firmly, even adding the word "Decidedly" to make his assurance quite emphatic. Why, then, do the other three refuse to tag along? An answer must be found at all costs, because if "Mr. Puff" is right and poets wrong, university courses in Jacobean drama must be stopped at once—indeed, all English literature may have to be re-examined and the bulk of it, probably, rejected decidedly.

On seeing the matter through "Mr. Puff's" eyes (we will take up his ears later) we realise that he has seen a play which falls short of every proper standard—which is to say, every *contemporary* standard. What living playwright, for instance, would send one of his main characters to a portable medicine-chest for a fluid which, if poured down his bride's throat, will make her sneeze and giggle if she is a virgin, but, if Kilroy has been there, only induce a sour depression—and this a key-scene in what is meant to be a horrid tragedy? Or can we imagine Mr. Harold Pinter ruining some admirable play of his about idiots by making an absurd sub-plot out of them and trying to pretend that two of them are only *disguised* as lunatics in order to seduce the psychiatrist's wife? Or imagine *Roots* with—but never mind; it is unthinkable; we shall not even draw attention to it. . . . Even the title is inadequate and misleading: certainly the play would have been called *Hymen's Holiday*, or *All's Lost By Lust*, or *A Match at Midnight* if the childish Rowley had not spent those titles on three earlier plays. But the title is unimportant; what matters is that "Mr. Puff" has genuine and obvious reasons for dismissing *The Changeling* as a melodramatic oddity.

We may presume that the three poets, too, have noted some clumsy, silly things in *The Changeling*. But for some reason they have not minded them very much; perhaps, unlike "Mr. Puff," they have thought it too late to rebel against Jacobean conventions—which is to say, they have not walked down the Drury Lane of Middleton's and Rowley's day and expected to bump into Ibsen, Chekhov, or some other such *recognisable* author. Every age has dramatic forms, magics, sciences, and methods that are apt to seem ludicrous to the Mr. Puffs of later centuries—so ludicrous that they hide the grandeurs and solemnities which accompany them. To us, for example, virginity is a completely worthless thing and we must struggle to imagine the interest of a Jacobean audience when this glory of immaturity was submitted to the impartial test of the very latest thing in Jacobean medicine.

A much more important point, however, than the changed value of virginity is the way in which the face of tragedy, if not its nature, changes through the centuries. Nietzsche speaks of someone who suggested that in early Greek eyes all human beings were equally and absolutely *laughable*; thus, man was fit only to be satirised and the dignity of pain was reserved strictly for gods, demi-gods, and legendary

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heads of houses. We may say that Christianity took much the same attitude until very recently, and that though it permitted a certain measure of sorrow to human beings, it insisted that the agony of Christ was the real tragedy and the human mourners at the foot of the Cross a mere "chorus" of agreement. By Shakespeare's day this strictness had relaxed: those who were capable of tragedy included such relatively ordinary folks as kings, generals, thanes, and even an occasional lady and gentleman. As time passes, tragedy becomes increasingly "popular" —in fact, we can actually watch Middleton and Rowley in the very act of letting the level down a notch further: their hero, de Flores, is, in the tale from which they took their play, "a Gallant young Gentleman;" it is only in their hands that he becomes a *fallen* gentleman and ugly servant. By the time Ibsen and Strindberg are writing, the tragic personnel has sunk to the level of country parsons and men who are proud of having reached the rank of captain in the army catering department. And so, from morn to dewy eve, the fall has continued, so that to-day even a commercial traveller is considered good enough for grief, and there is always room in Agamemnon's tomb for a repentant whore, a dead-beat, and doubtless even a newspaperman: *all* the "little men" who once laughed so boisterously or were stricken dumb by the agony of gods are now pinned to every Cross in sight—with shame-faced generals, judges, and statesmen keening awed and abashed at their broken feet. It is really a most curious development—and naturally we, who are accustomed to democratic tragedy, find it hard to believe that *Death of a Salesman* would only make Aeschylus say sadly: "I'm afraid it's not Greek to me." "Mr. Puff" cannot grasp Jacobean tragedy; but can he grasp that the raping of Lawrence in *Ross*, which all of us might regard as tragic if it were well written, would have seemed contemptibly human to the Greeks and not funny enough for a sub-plot to Middleton and Rowley?

THE CHANGELING belongs to that half-way period in which tragedy, much fallen from grandeur and edging into melodrama, still holds to many of its old, high-born dignities—and, indeed, builds on them strongly. It has a great Spanish castle for its setting, complete with Governor and garrison, and its characters are stuffed with Spanish pride, well dressed, eager to take offence, and brainless. In the recent production at the Royal Court, Mr. Tony Richardson saw with an absolutely accurate eye what a four-square piece of work it all was—how it could be erected in strong blocks, the characters appearing like shafts of flesh against a background of unremitting stoniness: this is always congenial to tragedy. He gave the impression—it is barely inaccurate even in the most pedantic view—that all was a single structure, with the castle heights reserved for the superiors and its depths and dungeons for mobs, murders, and madmen: thus, the eyes and the senses travelled up and down contentedly between plot and sub-plot, always with a happy feeling of formal unity. Miss Jocelyn Herbert's sets made a rigid confine of the stage —one admirable conception moved up and down the castle's interior like a lift. By taking his costumes from Goya, Mr. David Walker was able to set the characters like shadows upon stone walls, and Mr. Raymond Leppard's music completed a pleasure that has been expressed here with rather too much rhapsody. For the main feature of *The Changeling* is its rejection of rhapsody and roses: it allows all the beastliness that anyone could want, but it introduces sentiment purely in order to cut it dead.

This is evident, most fascinatingly, in the blank verse. It is of a sort that fits exactly the character of the rough villain, de Flores, who not only becomes exactly like his own words but is able to use them as a means of crushing the pretty poetics of others. This fallen gentleman, crude and ugly as Caliban, and fallen, historically speaking, midway between the heavenly Prometheus and the almost-subterranean Charlie Chaplin, has only one desire: to sate his lust for his lord's daughter. For this, he will lie, scheme, betray, and kill—do anything, in fact, but allow his lips and soul to be polluted by romance and sentiment. Thus, his words and phrases are always blunt and stony—and one reflects with much amusement on the fact that it is poets such as Swinburne and Mr. Eliot that recognise poetry in *The Changeling*, while "Mr. Puff" probably is not aware of its existence. This is because the normal rhythmic canter that the average ear is attuned to is here deliberately broken and made to seem dry and prosaic:

As if I had but half my hopes I agreed for...
Push, I aim
At a most rich success, strikes all dead sure.
I'm sure both
Cannot be serv'd unless she transgress; happily
Then I'll put in for one: for if a woman
Fly from one point, from him she makes a husband,
She spreads and mounts then like arithmetic,
One, ten, a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand,
Proves in time sutler to an army royal.

We have here irregularities lightly held in control by what Mr. Eliot has called "the ghost

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of some simple metre"—a half-hidden discipline which prevents "free" verse from being too free yet never forces it to jog-trot or run in lulling cadences. As de Flores, Mr. Robert Shaw caught the note exactly, speaking his lines mordantly and laconically and seeming constantly to be using his words as if they were *facts*—solids as hard and ugly as himself and incapable of being moved by the tears and postures of others. Miss Mary Ure has come in for unkind criticism as Beatrice-Joanna, but the truth is that hers is a calculatedly hapless role: unlike Lady Macbeth and Clytemnestra she must plot murder witlessly and romantically, precisely as Miss Ure did, and pay the dreadful price of hearing de Flores lay down the facts of life to her in a language that is not so much cruel as horribly plain and practical:

Push, you forget yourself!
A woman dipp'd in blood, and talk of modesty?
Push, fly not to your birth, but settle you
In what the act has made you, y'are no more now;
You must forget your parentage to me:
Y'are the deed's creature.

When such coarseness of speech is present to match the roughness of stone floors, while the dagger in the back makes the rapier look posed and silly, we are on a stage where tragedy can descend frequently into melodrama and even into nonsense without losing its remorseless quality. And where authors are so conscious of what they are doing—so dry, so calculating—we are bound, surely, to credit them with full knowledge of what they were about when they surrounded their brutal story with fools and madmen. We may see these creatures in various ways—as the howling Furies or the bitter chorus of old tragedy, as the ribald mockers of romantic views of human nature, as coarse matter poked in to keep the vulgar happy: perhaps they are all these; brains and box-office finding common ground at last—in a lunatic asylum.

If *The Changeling* falls short of the highest tragedy, it is chiefly for one reason: it embraces the hardness of destiny but excludes intensity of suffering. All the characters are too boorish or small-minded to feel pain: Middleton has killed them for his sport, because they were too vain, or too stuffy, or too brainless to live, and we feel the absence of both heartfelt lamentation and royal anguish.

Yet the fact remains that the raising of this long-buried Lazarus was a most admirable thing: the fellow, we find, was not dead at all—and stinking only to "Mr. Puff." Such a gala occasion demands immense bunches of flowers for those who arranged it, beginning with Mr. Richardson—who hewed to his authors inflexibly and never used their dead bodies as "creative" runways—and ending with the diligent professors who worked quietly behind the scenes for years, sorting out the texts and doing the punctuation. When a character is invited to inspect the "Bosphorus" from a castle in Spain, it is right for us to know that the authors wrote "Phosphorus," meaning the morning-star. And when such a line as *"Till th'are so old their sins and vices meet"* is restored by the diligent academic to its more sensible original form: *"Till th'are so old their chins and noses meet"*—why, then, a sunny levity breaks through and all literature seems suddenly to become likable.

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Edmund Wilson and Mario Praz

By Frank Kermode

TWO OF THE fundamental books of modern literary history have recently been published in cheap paperback editions,* and, reading them, I remembered some of Arnold's prescriptions for good criticism. He thought "poise" was very important; critics should be undulating and diverse; their criticism should not hurry, but be "patient" and "flexible, and know how to attach itself to things and how to withdraw from them." This is one requirement; another is that the critic should "ascertain the master-spirit in the literature of an epoch." Arnold, indeed, calls this second duty the highest function of the critic. Not everybody would agree, but it seems clear enough that the second of these tasks would come more easily to anybody who could manage the first, and also that whoever does both is a great man.

Axel's Castle came out in 1931, *The Romantic Agony* two years later. A hostile critic might argue that their continuing relevance is a matter of historical accident, "modern" literature being very little changed from what it was thirty years ago, as Mr. Graham Hough and others have contended. Still, they do survive, Mr. Wilson's book under the usually fatal handicap that some of the authors he discusses have published books since he wrote it. It may be that modern criticism is an over-rated department of knowledge, but even if it isn't, these books maintain their place, and it seems worth asking how they measure up to Arnold's criteria.

MR. WILSON is a very productive author; I don't know if he would call *Axel's Castle* his best book, though he might agree that it is his most influential. If one wanted to get a complete view of his work on the authors discussed in it, one would need to consider later essays as well; but it is more to the present purpose to see *Axel's Castle* as it stands, unrevised, a testimony to the author's flexibility and diagnostic power at a time when his subject as a whole was considerably more obscure than it is now. The first powerful impression one receives on re-reading the book is that it anticipates a whole era of literary discussion; many writers, including the present, might unworthily murmur over its pages, *pereant qui ante nos nostra dixere*. Naturally one soon rests in a more comfortable conviction that it also missed quite a lot, and left employment for Mr. Wilson's successors. But his real achievement was to identify, even if he could not completely describe, the master-spirit of an age. He grasped the relation between Romantic and Symbolist, the ivory tower and the cork-lined bedroom; he understood the role of various substitutes for science, and the persistent anti-intellectualism of the whole tradition; he saw how the Romantic cult of personality was turned into its apparent opposite, a cult of impersonality; he understood why English 17th-century poetry took on a special importance in the age of Symbolism; and he perceived that the arts of post-Symbolism had a special survival problem. He was able to say new things of a period just past, and make intelligent guesses about the immediate future, because he was sensitively aware of the actual moment and its moods. For example, he is very shrewd about Mr. Eliot's effect on the sensibility of the period: "the sound of jazz, which formerly seemed jolly, now inspired only horror and despair;" and this quality enabled him also to see that hope for the future of verse-drama must rest on "Wanna Go Home, Baby?" (*Sweeney Agonistes*).

THE REAL *donnée* of *Axel's Castle* is the perception that the literary history of our time is "to a great extent that of the development of Symbolism and of its fusion or conflict with

* *Axel's Castle*. By EDMUND WILSON. The Fontana Library, 6s. *The Romantic Agony*. By MARIO PRAZ. The Fontana Library, 7s. 6d.

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Naturalism." In view of the close relations of Symbolist and Romantic æsthetics, this can be taken to mean that modern literature is still working out the revolutionary theses of the first Romantics. The scope of the 20th-century revolution is thus greatly reduced, and it is possible to see it as an effort to develop, almost to the point of mania, some elements of the earlier movement. Thus Wilson, who admires nearly all the authors he discusses, is nevertheless able to say that their works are greatly and unnecessarily at odds with the world they live in, that they neglect the purposes of art as he understands them, and that they may very well be cultivating powers which will destroy art. In short, he was patient and flexible; he knew how to attach himself and then withdraw; to ascertain and subsequently to comment critically upon the master-spirit of the age.

In a lecture of 1940 Wilson says what he thinks literature is, and how the historical critic ought to deal with it. He is not a critic who finds literature all-sufficient; without mistaking it for another thing he is always asking whether another thing will tell him more about it. He uses Freud and Marx and the anthropologists; if a machine can be devised to give information about that emotional stimulus from which criticism begins, he will use that, too. He has no interest in any notion of literature as autotelic.

> All our intellectual activity, in whatever field it takes place, is an attempt to give a meaning to our experience—that is, to make life more practicable; for by understanding things we make it easier to survive and get around among them. The mathematician Euclid, working in a convention of abstractions, shows up relations between the unwieldy and cluttered-up environment upon which we are able to count. A drama of Sophocles also indicates relations between the various human impulses, which appear so confused and dangerous. . . . The kinship, from this point of view, of the purposes of science and art, appears very clearly from the case of the Greeks. . . . The experience of mankind on the earth is always changing as man develops and has to deal with new combinations of elements; and the writer who is to be anything more than an echo of his predecessors must always find expression for something that has never yet been expressed, must master a new set of phenomena. . . . With each such victory of the human intellect . . . we experience a deep satisfaction; we have been cured of some ache of disorder, relieved of some oppressive burden of uncomprehended events.

This is clearly the credo of a man with a deep theoretical hostility to Symbolism. Yeats, for example, would have found it almost entirely abhorrent. It emphasises the intellectual aspect of art, treats the intellect as an instrument of biological adaptation; it speaks of man as developing, and of art as dealing in phenomena. How, then, does he come to write so well of the heirs of Symbolism? How does he avoid treating *The Waste Land* as a mere symptom of decadence, or—in the language of a celebrated contemporary review—as a terrible warning ("the ravings of a drunken helot")? The reason is simply that he has a powerful primary, undogmatic, response to poetry; he can attach himself and then withdraw, and on withdrawal feels free to disapprove. In fact this is the whole method of *Axel's Castle*: passionate identification with the work under discussion; followed by detached appraisal; followed by historical inference, which does not neglect the primary response. Before asking whether the work is of any use to mankind, whether it will help us round the environmental obstacles, he proves that he has, in any case, responded to it. Now and again there may be an apparent split down the middle of his criticism, self-contradiction almost; but that is because he is working out in his own head the whole dialectic of Symbolist art and the world it inhabits.

MR. WILSON has one skill which may seem a very humble one, and does not occupy the attention of theorists: he is a master of summary. In this book he summarises all the major works of his authors, sometimes at considerable length, as with *Ulysses* and *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. This part of his work is exemplary, for he is patient and thorough, and never "loads" his accounts to make his later withdrawal and appraisal simpler. The chapter on Yeats, a poet whose cast of mind is antithetical to Wilson's own, is in some ways inadequate (it ends, characteristically, with a warm tribute to *"Among Schoolchildren,"* which he sees as a great poem without being able to say why) but it contains a very careful account of *A Vision*, a good and simple explanation of the doctrine of the Mask; in short, the critic gave his mind patiently to matters which must in themselves have seemed sadly trivial. Similarly with Valéry; without sacrificing his independence Wilson gives almost the account of a disciple, and then withdraws, complains that Valéry is often platitudinous or affected, and sometimes makes a pretence of exactitude in order "to cover a number of ridiculously false assumptions," the chief of which is the assumption that verse is an intellectual product absolutely different in kind from prose.

This method is most clearly perceived in the chapter on Proust, where 23 pages go by before we turn over and find this: "The fascination of Proust's novel is so great that, while we are

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reading it, we tend to accept it *in toto*." Then come the withdrawal, the questions and qualifications. Throughout the remainder of the chapter the critic's admiration for Proust's novel has to contend with his disturbance at its contempt for those problems which, in his view, it is the business of art to solve. Proust, he decides at last, was the "last great historian of the... Heartbreak House of capitalist culture." So with Joyce; a full admiring account of *Ulysses*, and then the reservations: with so much vitality, why does Joyce have so little movement? Being "the great poet of a new phase of human consciousness," why should Joyce have cultivated opacity where it could have been avoided? Instead of making his book as easy as possible for the ordinary reader, he often makes it harder than it need be, "as if he were shy and solicitous about it, and wanted to protect it from us." Even Gertrude Stein, nearer the pole of uncommunicativeness, gets a fair showing.

FOR WHAT REASON, apart from his evident pleasure in the books, did Wilson think them worth his care, deplorable as their tendencies seemed to be? One answer is that he saw them as, almost in spite of themselves, closely related to modern scientific speculation, repeating the Greek pattern. Proust provides "a sort of equivalent in fiction for the metaphysics" of Whitehead. In his world, "as in the universe of Whitehead, the 'events,' which may be taken arbitrarily as infinitely small or infinitely comprehensive, make up an organic structure." Joyce's world resembles those of Proust, Whitehead, and Einstein, in that it is "always changing as it is perceived by different observers and by them at different times. It is an organism made up of 'events.'" Wilson likes these authors, and would be happy to think they collaborated with the scientists and philosophers in developing a new and more useful world-view; in optimistic mood he dares to hope that Valéry was wrong in his prediction that the arts and sciences would become infinitely specialised; perhaps, on the contrary, they will "finally fall all into one system." This indeed is the note upon which he ends, emphasising the great gifts these authors have made to mankind: new flexibility, new freedom of movement in a better-understood world,

> the hope and exaltation of the untried, unsuspected possibilities of human thought and art.

But the question remains, how is this hope compatible with what has been said of the anti-social assumptions of these writers? They belong to the cork-lined cell; they shun all experience except that which can be "savoured in solitude." When we read them, says Wilson,

> we are oppressed by a sullenness, a lethargy, a sense of energies ingrown and sometimes festering. Even the poetry of the noble Yeats, still repining through middle age over the emotional miscarriages of youth, is dully weighted, for all its purity and candour, by a leaden acquiescence in defeat.

They saw the future as dark; art surviving only as a game, the ceremony of innocence drowned. They lived on the past and the primitive; on their own despair and isolation, and the poverty of the new world. They make Wilson wonder whether poetry is not destined soon to fall into complete disuse.... What I am pointing out in *Axel's Castle* is not a contradiction but a tension; the book contains in little whatever can be said for and against the kind of art we now have. In some ways the whole issue is now clearer, not because we are shrewder than Wilson, but because we have watched it develop. He saw it, and accurately described it, thirty years ago; and he did more, he put the tension into his book instead of merely talking about it. This is to ascertain the master-spirit of the age. For all that we need to supplement it with other and lesser books, *Axel's Castle* is very much alive, and everybody's business.

PROFESSOR PRAZ is the greatest of foreign students of English, an authority in very diverse fields, and above all a man of power and originality. I hope somebody is translating his recent autobiography; Professor Praz ought to be seen in his Roman setting. He has written many books, and *The Romantic Agony* is not his only "standard work;" but it is the book he is best known by. It is strictly a work of literary history, though it can hardly help "casting some light upon the most profound instincts of humanity," or escape misuse by anybody who needs a florilegium of perversions. Praz foresaw this; from the outset—perhaps from that moment in a train in which he is said to have conceived the whole work—he knew that his book would be confused with works he despised, such as Nordau's *Degeneration*, and also with medico-scientific writings. There is no excuse for such mistakes. Life has tended to imitate the art he discusses, and he takes note of the fact; but he is not at all concerned to make Sade attractive, or even to claim literary merit for his books. He confines himself to literary tendencies without attempting the psychoanalysis of authors, and refrains from explicit estimates of literary value. *The Romantic Agony* is long and sometimes repetitive, simply because the author decided to present all the necessary evidence, sketch in the historical

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pattern, and leave the rest to the reader. Only a remarkable critic would have been capable of the intuition which preceded the selection of the material; this is simply another way of ascertaining the master-spirit of an age.

The book looks back to the pathological elements of early Romantic thought, and it looks forward to the 20th century; but it balances on the Decadence. In a favourite figure of the author's, it is a two-faced herm, one face looking back to Sade, Shelley, and Byron, the other contemplating the new world. Its main object of study is the epoch of neurasthenia. This term, devised by an American doctor in 1868, was accepted by G. M. Beard as naming a characteristic modern stress disease; Freud adopted it but later gave it up. It is therefore specially appropriate to the period when literary men were doing the preparatory work of psychoanalysis; it dropped out when their material drained away into the casebooks. In the neurasthenic period it became commonplace to proclaim the disintegration of society. The symptoms of collapse were "hysteria, morphinomania, scientific charlatanism, Schopenhauerism *à l'outrance*." At such a time the *Primavera* could strike a man as "satanic, irresistible, terrifying." Marcel Schwob said that the novelists had done much to bring about this condition by exposing aspects of human behaviour formerly hidden. Now there was a desire to escape from this too-well-known world into occultism, into primitive art; a man might suffer from *"le désir douloureux de m'aliéner de moi-même."*

Professor Praz's problem was to remain aloof without being merely clinical. He keeps his balance admirably. For example, he writes calmly of Baudelaire, but qualifies as erroneous the tendency to play down the poet's satanic and algolagnic characteristics, a misguided attempt to establish his greatness by minimising the *frisson nouveau*. His treatment of Pater is likewise admirable in its perceptiveness, but also in its detachment. One senses throughout—in the commentary, in the massed quotations, in the exhaustive notes—the play of a delicate historical intelligence.

The material is very simply organised. Two chapters deal with early Romantic themes, the Medusa ("beauty tainted with pain, corruption, death") which foreshadows the later triumph of similar themes, and Satanism, with special reference to Byron. There follows a study of Sade, the greatest single influence on the tradition that culminated in the art of Decadence. Then there is a chapter on the Decadent theme of the Fatal Woman, *"La Belle Dame sans Merci"*; and finally a chapter called "Byzantium," the crown of the book, and full

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of rich material on the cult of Salome, on Decadent occultism and the *finis latinorum*, with D'Annunzio as a climactic manifestation. Obviously many more cases might be added to the file, the theme of the book lends itself to indefinite extension. But *The Romantic Agony* amply proves its points, and as a record of the pathology of art in a period so immediately relevant to our own it justifies the claim that its author contributes to an understanding of the master-spirit of his age.

Professor Praz would probably argue that the main object of his book was to increase understanding of a past period, and he does not undertake prognoses. What is very surprising is that his emblems of Decadence—La Belle Dame and Byzantium—survived the period of neurasthenia and were transformed. A reading of *The Romantic Agony* can strangely illuminate Yeats. He was committed to the Decadence as Professor Praz was not, and some of the men who, in Praz's words, "asked nothing better than to have their minds poisoned" by the Divine Marquis and others were Yeats' friends, and became his Tragic Generation—no longer deluded minor poets but vital elements of his *Weltanschauung*. In the same manner he transformed the Fatal Woman; Salome is for him no longer a passing fashion, but a central figure in his theatre and his thought. An even more remarkable example of this transmutation of decadent themes is afforded by a comparison between the Decadent Byzantium and Yeats'.

> The period of antiquity with which these artists of the *fin de siècle* liked best to compare their own was the long Byzantine twilight, that gloomy apse gleaming with dull gold and gory purple, from which peer enigmatic faces, barbaric yet refined, with dilated neurasthenic pupils.... The Byzantine period was a period of anonymous corruption, with nothing of the heroic about it; only there stand put against the monotonous background figures such as Theodora or Irene, who are static personifications of the female lust for power.

There is no need to explain what Yeats, after long study and meditation, made of this fashion. His love of the Decadence—of Moreau, for example—his habit of categorising men he admired in terms of which the Decadence would have approved—Robert Gregory, for instance—is unintelligible if one does not see that in some ways the period was more closely related to our own than its habitual themes suggest; for that reason a great poet was able at least to give them a place in modern art.

THIS IS THE KIND of speculation Professor Praz denies himself. Wyndham Lewis claimed that *The Romantic Agony* was merely "the historical dossier for my 'Diabolical Principle.'" It is a dossier, certainly, but of something more than Lewis' polemic. It was equally absurd to speak of Praz's "diabolism." He wrote as a detached literary historian, and even preferred to leave the reader to make his own inferences. He describes the fantasies of the cork-lined cell; he might have gone on to explain how these were related to more fruitful elements of Decadent-Symbolist thought, but that he refrained from doing so is further evidence for that disinterest he conceived to be proper, and which has, quite wrongly, been called in question. I think it true to say that anybody who had read *Axel's Castle* and *The Romantic Agony* was, by 1933, in a position to command great tracts of modern literature, and also—despite the vast output of scholarship and criticism since then—that they continue to be essential aids.

Man to Man

A Minority: a Report on the Life of the Male Homosexual in Great Britain. By GORDON WESTWOOD. *Longmans*, 30s.

PROBABLY nearly everybody knows by now that *A Minority* consists of the analysis of interviews with 127 male homosexuals, most of them from London, and is a most detailed and careful piece of research, within its limits superior to anything else which has appeared on this subject.

It is superior in two respects: first, the informants (or contacts, to use Mr. Westwood's phrase) were drawn from the population at large, instead of, as in nearly all previous studies, from prisoners or from psychiatric patients. Mr. Westwood achieved this by persuading his original contacts to introduce friends to be interviewed; over two-thirds of the sample were found in this way, though only three secondary contacts were taken from each original contact, to prevent concentration on a single clique (as seems to have been the case with G. W. Henry's *Sex Variants*); in this way a good scatter in age, education, social class, and occupation was achieved.

Secondly, a consistent attempt has been made to see the homosexuals in the setting of English society; their family background is explored to attempt (on a rather superficial level) to give some statistical backing to various theories of the "origin" of homosexuality, and a lot of attention is paid to their occupations, their

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religious life, their attempts to get help and advice, their meeting-places, and their relationship with the law, both the offences they commit against public decency and their sufferings at the hands of the police and magistrates, of blackmailers and assailants. This is a great advance on the taxonomic approach, as used from Krafft-Ebing to Kinsey, which concentrated on overt sexual behaviour. If I now proceed to criticise some aspects of Mr. Westwood's study, these criticisms should not be understood to modify my commendation.

Despite its considerable merits, I think Mr. Westwood's study suffers from his psychological and anthropological naïvety; and this naïvety, which is by no means peculiar to Mr. Westwood, ultimately rests on a semantic confusion. "Homosexuality" is a false isolate, a term covering a number of conditions whose only common bond is that some sort of sexual relationship takes place between two people of the same sex. It is a false isolate in much the same way as "cancer" or "schizophrenia" are false isolates. Little progress was made while cancer or schizophrenia were looked on as entities with one "cause" and one potential "cure;" advances occurred when these false isolates were treated as clusters, when researchers acted (even if their vocabulary did not entirely reflect their practice) on the assumption that they were dealing with an indefinite number of cancerous or schizophrenic syndromes and studied one at a time "the cancers" or "the schizophrenias."

In a very analogous fashion, I feel sure that one should think about "the homosexualities." On the present evidence, there would seem to be three major forms, and one minor one; they probably have different aetiologies, and certainly have different social consequences. To discuss them it is necessary to introduce a vocabulary; and I propose to use the terms *pederast* (pederasty), *homophile* (homophilia), and *pathic* (pathicism). Paedophiliac (paedophilia) is already in the vocabulary for the minor form, the child-molesters; this would appear to be considered a grossly pathological condition in all societies of which we have record and does not call for discussion. (Mr. Westwood probably has three among his contacts.)

According to present evidence, all the homosexualities are socially produced or induced; and societies have been described in which they do not occur. All these societies (such as the Arapesh, the Lepcha, the Mundugumor, the Siriono) are on a very simple level of technical elaboration; and they all share the common characteristic that they make little contrast between the concepts of masculinity and femininity, between the ideals of manhood and womanhood. Boys are not brought up with the

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instructions: "All real men do..." or "No proper man does...;" and there is no possibility of confused sexual identification. Male and female are defined by their primary sexual characteristics only, not by temperament, interests, or aptitudes which may be considered incongruous to one sex or the other. Although there may be habitual division of labour between the sexes, a man does not derogate from his masculinity by performing women's tasks.

When on the other hand the roles of the sexes are very strongly contrasted, and particularly when women are secluded, there is a high probability of institutionalised pederasty. This is not a universal; and when there is a very strong contrast between the roles of the sexes and no institutionalised pederasty, a certain number of pathics would seem to occur.

The characteristic feature of pederasty is that there is an age differential (typically a generation, but in some age-grade societies an age-group) between the partners, the older being the lover and the younger the beloved; and in many societies only the lover is meant to achieve genital gratification. Behaviour should be governed by age rather than temperament. Typically, the adolescent boy is chosen as a beloved by an older man; after the passage of some years whose termination is defined in various ways (shaving of the first beard, moving into the next class of warriors, and the like) the young man marries and produces children; when his own children are reared, he becomes the lover of adolescents.

This pattern is socially viable, and has been found in a considerable number of societies all over the world, typically warrior societies with harems or the equivalent, from feudal Japan to classical Greece and very nearly contemporary Pathans and Albanians. By socially viable, I mean that it can be followed by all or most of the men of the society without psychological discomfort or the production of obvious neurosis, and without interfering with the genital competence and fertility necessary to maintain the population. In many of these societies pederasty has been the main subject of the arts, particularly lyrical poetry, and the main source of tender and elevated emotions. Of all the homosexualities, it is probably the most alien to our society and on some levels the most shocking. We tend to feel disapproval, if not disgust, at heterosexual couples when there is a considerable disparity of age between the partners; and we are disturbed at the notion of adolescents having strong emotional attachments to adults, even where there is no overt sexuality.

It is probable that the full sequence is temperamentally congenial to some men in most societies; but it also seems unlikely that the full sequence is often followed in societies where it is not socially approved (an abbreviated version of the sequence, without the heterosexual period, has not been uncommon in all-male boarding schools and similar institutions). It is impossible to tell whether any of Mr. Westwood's contacts should be described as pederasts; he has not used the concept himself; and owing to the overriding necessity of protecting his contacts' anonymity, neither quotations nor tabulated experiences are connected with identified individuals. Some 19 of his contacts had their first sexual experience with an adult when they were under seventeen; the same number (but there is nothing to show whether they are the same people) as adults are willing or would like to have sexual relations with boys under seventeen; 10 were married at the time of the interview, and 17 hoped to marry. If these figures refer to the same people in any instances then, it would seem, they could properly be described as pederasts.

I HAVE CHOSEN the term *homophilia* (which, according to Mr. Westwood, is current in high-minded homosexual circles in Switzerland and Scandinavia) to describe the situation where the object of the homosexual's desires is another homosexual, to a greater or lesser extent a mirror image of himself. The relationships between homophiles seem to approximate very closely to the relationships between adult heterosexual men and women (with the obvious difference that both partners have male genitals) running the gamut between settled and prolonged monogamous cohabitation and complete promiscuity. One of Mr. Westwood's contacts said: "Most of my friends are in what might be called the young married set of the homosexual world;" and some two-thirds of his contacts have had, or are enjoying, affairs, which are defined as "a strong emotional relationship between two men which has lasted over a year." It is probably a pair of homophiles whom most people think of when they refer to "consenting adults;" and it is the same picture which Brigadier Terence Clark, M.P., of Portsmouth West, boisterously depicted in the House of Commons on June 29th as "a couple of hairy old males sitting on each other's knees and liking it...." Homophiles certainly make up the major portion of Mr. Westwood's sample, at least a half (from the table on page 157), and probably over three-quarters. On this evidence, homophilia is the most prevalent of the homosexualities in England to-day; and may well be so in other Western countries. The homophile contacts come from a wide scatter of social classes, professions, and occupations; apart from their sexual tastes they

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P U T N A M

seem to represent a good cross-section of adult English males.

In contrast to the pederast and the pathic, it is very hard to find examples or analogues of homophilia in societies outside the Judeo-Christian tradition; and there do not seem to be many examples within it before the last century, as far as the literary evidence goes. There are accounts of some courts where the kings had "favourites"—James the First of England, Henry the Third of France, and so on; in 19th-century novels there are occasional pairs of men "chumming" together (for example, Mortimer Lightwood and Eugene Wrayburn in *Our Mutual Friend*) and emotionally attached to one another; and that, as far as I know, is about all. It is possible, of course, that the subject was surrounded with so much mystery and unholy horror that outsiders knew nothing about it and insiders left no records; but even in the erotic or pornographic books that I know of there are no characters who could be considered homophiles, though sodomites and pathics are relatively frequent. I think it may be a genuinely modern phenomenon.

Although the aetiology of any of the homosexualities is obscure, it seems likely that among the antecedent conditions of homophilia are castration anxiety (in the psycho-analytic sense of the term) and the absence of a model of appropriate male behaviour at significant periods of the young boy's development. Castration anxiety may be induced directly by threats against infantile masturbation and possibly analogically, following operations or other attacks on the body during early childhood. Adult interference with infantile masturbation does not seem to be widespread in most non-European societies; and the survival of sickly children, through medical or surgical intervention, has very greatly increased in the last century. It may be significant that two-fifths of Mr. Westwood's contacts reported that they had bad health in childhood.

The absence of an appropriate male model becomes much more likely when the typical household is reduced to the nuclear family of a man and wife living alone with their children. This again is a relatively uncommon phenomenon outside the advanced industrial societies in the last hundred years. Although the middle and upper classes lived in isolated dwellings, adult men were numerous as indoor or outdoor servants in these richer households; the poor lived either in composite households or so closely on top of one another that male models were always present. The isolated nuclear family household is not common in non-European societies. In about a fifth of Mr. Westwood's cases there was no man in the home;

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and over half of his contacts were an only child or an only son.

Pederasts (in the active phase) and homophiles resemble heterosexual men in that the goal of their sexual strivings is a genital orgasm; the objects which produce these orgasms are different but the physiological concomitants are similar. With pathics this is not the case; their pleasure comes from the orgasms they provoke in other men, and they have either abandoned more or less completely the pleasurable employment of their own genitals ("I hate anything to do with my own penis and I hate anyone to touch it" says one of Mr. Westwood's contacts); or else, possibly, use them for heterosexual intercourse only. It seems likely that pathics are more frequently married men than are homophiles.

ENGLAND IS UNCOMMON among modern nations, or languages, in not recognising the pathic in common speech or insult. If we wish to impugn the masculinity of another man, either seriously or metaphorically, we call him a "bugger," which suggests a type of genital activity; in similar circumstances an American calls him a "c———r", a Frenchman *"espèce d'enculé."* (It is a curious point, not without significance, that in common speech none of these words have reciprocals, to designate the insulted man's partner.) For a vocabulary we have to go to Latin; imperial Rome appears to have been much preoccupied with the activities of pathics, which are detailed with (surely sanctimonious) disapproval; Juvenal, Martial, and Petronius cannot let the subject alone.

Rather surprisingly, the pathic has been socially recognised and integrated in some societies, as priests in some of the middle eastern cults (for example, that of Cybele; see Apuleius) and also in some of the Siberian tribes, as shamans. The most remarkable integration was the institution of berdache in some of the warrior tribes among the American Plains Indians. A youth who felt temperamentally incapable of attaining to the highly aggressive ideal of masculinity demanded in these societies could opt for the alternative of becoming a "social" woman, wearing women's clothes and learning women's crafts, following their taboos and even going through a simulacrum of childbirth. It is said that, while the parents of the berdache were very distressed at such a choice, the berdache himself was socially accepted, but some contempt was felt for his "husband," chiefly because he had so much easier a life than the men married to weak women who had to support real children. The same point comes up in Mr. Westwood's book (quoting F. J. G. Jefferiss) in the discussion of what he calls "facultative homosexuals:" "the male consort is less clinging and cheaper, not requiring so much courting and money spent on him . . . and . . . there is no risk of making the partner pregnant or being trapped into matrimony."

The "facultative homosexuals," in Mr. Westwood's vocabulary, are those men who consider themselves heterosexually "normal" but engage on occasion in some form of homosexual intercourse. None of Mr. Westwood's contacts can probably be so considered (it is surprising that, in the discussion of this group, Mr. Westwood has not considered narcissism as a major motive for allowing homage from anybody of any sex willing to give it); but they are relevant in this context as the probable partners of the pathic. Almost by definition the pathic does not desire partners who are themselves homophile.

A fifth of Mr. Westwood's sample are "very interested in non-homosexuals, would prefer them as sexual partners;" and for just on the same number (though apparently not predominantly the same people) passive anal intercourse was the most usual and preferred technique. Unfortunately, in his short paragraph on oral-genital techniques (preferred and practised by less than ten per cent of his sample: other cultures would probably produce very different

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figures) Mr. Westwood does not distinguish between those who perform and those who submit to this; but it seems likely that something more than a tenth of his contacts were wholly or predominantly pathic.

Pathicism is for most people *uncanny*, since it seeks a sexual pleasure which is not immediately involved with the primary sexual apparatus. It is in a way symbolic magic; the pathics are taking "goodness" or "strength" from their "normal" partners. And it is, I think, this uncanny, magical aspect which accounts for some of the holy horror which some people feel for the whole subject of homosexuality. In the House of Commons debate on the Wolfenden report on June 29th (already referred to), Mr. Godfrey Lagden, M.P., of Hornchurch, voiced an almost clinically perfect expression of this magical fear:

> Especially should people be punished if their actions, which I contend are evil, have physical and mental danger to those with whom they come in contact....
>
> In my opinion, in the general run the homosexual is a dirty-minded danger to the virile manhood of this country. The Right Hon. Lady the Member for Warrington (Dr. Summerskill) laughs, but it is important for any country to have a virile manhood and to see that it is not corrupted by such men as these....
>
> I am sure that if many Hon. Members had seen the mental and the physical state to which some young men have been reduced by being corrupted by these homosexuals they would know what was their duty to-night.

THIS PLEA WOULD scarcely need the alteration of a word to represent the fear which is felt in so many cultures (and in our own a few centuries ago) of the effect of malicious witchcraft, of sorcery. Mr. Westwood experienced the prevalence of this fear in the difficulties, which he recounts in the first paragraph of his acknowledgments, in getting funds, co-operation, or facilities for his research.

In this outline of some of the major forms of the homosexualities, I am not suggesting that every man who engages in homosexual activities falls neatly and unambiguously into one of the categories. What I do suggest is that these syndromes form clusters, and that if Mr. Westwood had been aware of them and had tabulated them separately, his analysis of family constellations, work records, community integration and the like might have given more consistent and revealing tables. When all the homosexualities are lumped together the results (if my contention is correct, inevitably) become so blurred that there remain practically no generalisations one can make about the group except for the sex of their preferred partners and their unhappy posi-

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tion in relation to the law and (though to a lesser extent) to society at large. On these latter aspects Mr. Westwood is admirably humane and level-headed; *A Minority* is the best book for the non-specialised reader which has yet appeared on the subject.

Geoffrey Gorer

Truth in Fiction

We Think the World of You. By J. R. Ackerley. *The Bodley Head*, 13s. 6d.

Moral seriousness, engagement, a picture of Society, living issues; these and other similar phrases, which now often enter into judgments of plays and novels, are usually a confused demand that works of fiction should be truthful. A "confused" demand, because the phrases themselves are much too restrictive. They seem to imply that we already know the kind of relation between fiction and reality that we shall encounter in a truthful work of fiction before the work is done. We cannot know, and, for rather different reasons, the author cannot know himself. The relation between the social realities, and the art that may truthfully reflect them, is, and always has been, more complex, less direct. Often we are only able to tell in retrospect exactly how, and in what respects, a novel or play is a true recreation of some features of contemporary consciousness and of social change. A critic is not in a position to predict the form in which a truthful relation between fiction and reality will at any time be achieved, and even less in a position to give instruction as to how it should be: to predict or to prescribe a particular style and form of representation. These are found in a particular writer's imagination, which has its own still unknown sources and needs, and in his own eccentric experiences. We know, from the history of literature and of the visual arts, that the intentions and the theme of a writer or artist may make no reference to contemporary social realities, and yet an exact loyalty to his own imagination has led him, indirectly, as can be seen in retrospect, to some truthful reflection of the conflicts of his time. The case was argued by Proust—once and for all, as one might have hoped—in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, and in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* itself: that is, the case against social realism, and against a willed engagement in living issues, either as a writer's proper programme, or as a necessary principle of critical judgment. By obstinately working out, alone, the form of expression that his own unrecognised conflicts require, an original writer will always arrive in his work at an unintended, or not fully intended, comment on the society around him and on its possible future.

There are a hundred and more ways of representing an ambiguous truth in fiction, whether as a novel or a play, and of making the ambiguity and the truthfulness memorable. A critic has no reason to set a limit to them. He is called only to compare and to assess past and present examples. If he is tempted to assimilate all his examples to a common type of truthfulness, he will need also to mark great differences; otherwise it will seem that he claims too much. His examples will become superfluous variants of that single truth which the critic himself might (as he thinks) have written. But if he sees each of his chosen examples as unique and incomparable, and any assimilation of them as mere vulgarity, it will seem that the idea of truthfulness as an attribute of fiction has no hold on him. This is the vacuity of criticism as *belles lettres*. Truth, and truthfulness, certainly imply that that which is internally convincing and coherent still has to be compared with something external to itself: can we really find in general experience the particular modes of consciousness and of feeling that are here for the first time fully distinguished? Or is this mere self-expression?

I am not a critic, but I wish to draw attention to a novel which seems to set a standard of truthfulness: J. R. Ackerley's *We Think the World of You*. It seems to me an example and a test. It is slight in length and it is confined in subject. A dog is one of the three principal characters. The narrator-hero's background is shadowy, almost non-existent. There is no density of description, no deliberate exploration of society. It may be thought to have none of the attributes of a considerable novel, because of the strangeness of the episode imagined, and realistically presented, which lies on a far margin of common experience. Certainly it has nothing in common with that now familiar type of well-intentioned English novel, which is a confused mixture of sexual fantasy and social aspiration: that dead centre of up-to-the-minute moralising, lifted by rhetoric, which cannot fail to seem instantly important and to be instantly forgotten, except as a historical document.

We Think the World of You is coolly and lightly written, with very great attention to detail and to economy. Every undue emphasis is refined away, and the form of the story is

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definite, self-enclosed, and exact. The outstanding originality of the book is the handling of the narrator, and this is the critical point at which comparisons with almost everything now being written suggest themselves. There is not the smallest stain either of fantasy or of heavy psychological typing or of imposed irony. Without being explained, the narrator-hero is intelligible. He does not appear simply as the author observing, nor simply as the author's creation fitted into the story. He is the man who would have had this story to tell, and would have been able to tell it: but not as perfectly as this. This is the necessary illusion, and one does not notice it while one reads. The method and style are near to Mr. Isherwood's of twenty-five years ago, no less sure and rather less prosaic. The dialogue is equally scrupulous. Every character in the story emerges in the dialogue alone. The lightness and deftness, the lack of emphasis, flow from the dialogue, from Mr. Ackerley's careful ear and studied rightness in detail. He does not seem to be controlling his characters, and they outrun him, as they escape also from the narrator. The integrity of the novel is largely a consequence of this effacement of the author, of his not claiming knowledge, of his not making his characters and story representative of some social generalities. The people of the story are sharply presented and vivid, but uncharted and therefore free.

The story, as told, *is* representative in many ways, although there is no evident intention that it should be. It is, amongst other things, a sad and comic comment on Mr. Forster's well-known advice: "only connect." Baffled, irritable, obstinate, and solitary, the narrator tries to connect, making gestures and absurdly expecting a response, as if from the same world of feeling and of need. The only creature that truly responds is the dog, who does indeed call for human help and who is able to accept it. The narrator is obsessed with freedom, and those that he loves are prisoners, who are to owe their liberation to him. The lyrical descriptions, the brief climaxes of the story, are of moments of liberation, of natural breaking away from ties, from confinement and repression. The end of the story of failure is symmetrical and unexpected: again, convincing and truthful without emphasis.

It is not a book that invites, or needs, interpretation. There are no artfully buried implications. The shape of the story is entirely clear and meaningful. But there is a critical objection which is an objection to this clarity itself. The brief story, so carefully shaped, is presented in an entirely classical manner, as of an episode that is finished and is now quietly to be viewed in retrospect. There is no surviving conflict,

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and the impression left, in spite of the lightness, and even gaiety, of some of the scenes, is finally one of melancholy and resignation. This kind of writing is a long way from those hearty invocations to Life, that rhetoric of good fellows, which are the points of resolution in some plays at the Royal Court Theatre and in some contemporary novels. There is no warm glow, no blurring of the hard outlines. Instead we have a small, but definite and unmistakable, work of art, and this is itself an encouragement, and one that is more likely to last. But the absence of conflict in the mind of the reader, the retrospective view of an episode finished and complete, does indeed detract from the vitality of the book. The controlled perfection of it is perhaps a limitation.

It remains to be enjoyed, and will be enjoyed, wherever style, as exactness and a just sense of form in telling a story, is looked for in a novel. This is an eccentric and strange episode of the conversion of love. But a very particular case is turned into a general truth by the art of fiction.

Stuart Hampshire

Coca-Cola

The Big Drink: An Unofficial History of Coca-Cola. By E. G. Kahn Jr. *Max Reinhardt,* 15s.

It was only when I was nearly run down by a Coca-Cola truck in the Rue de Berri that I fully grasped the impact of the most representative American product on France and on Europe. For Coca-Cola is the most widespread American export, its advertising the most widespread symbol of American culture and the opposition it has aroused is among the most revealing indications of the state of European culture. Mr. Kahn in this highly-entertaining and illuminating book has told, with a slightly tongue-in-cheek irony, the history of this great American industry and symbol. The history has its own fascination. For the Coca-Cola Company keeps its secret formula to itself, but licenses the right to manufacture and bottle the elixir to companies all over the world. It is a monopoly but one of a peculiar kind, for in every country where Coca-Cola is sold there are important local interests involved in its manufacture and sale. This policy makes the parent company less open to charges of economic imperialism than are some other great American corporations. The millionaires made by Coca-Cola are not confined to Atlanta, Georgia. They can be found all over the United States, and now all over the world. The rulers of the parent company in Atlanta could say, if they thought of it, *"Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?"*

This world empire has naturally aroused suspicion. Mr. Kahn gives ingenious reasons why it is widely believed, erroneously, that Coca-Cola salesmen and agents are American intelligence operatives. In many European countries, at any rate, the idea that great fortunes could be made from the sale of a potion like Coca-Cola beggared credulity. Already willing to believe in the conspiratorial character of American economic policy, Frenchmen and Italians were not surprised to learn that Coca-Cola represented the long arm of the Pentagon. The Communist parties in these countries used the Coca-Cola invasion as a means of stirring up anti-American feeling. And they were, of course, heartily supported by the booze lobbies. This campaign probably helped the United States. After all, a great many people in Europe did acquire a taste for this harmless fluid. A great many people, alarmed at the inroads of alcoholism rejoiced in the triumph of Coca-Cola, and the cynicism of the Communist propaganda probably hurt the Party.

Yet Coca-Cola was an instrument of Americanisation in more ways than changing the drinking habits of Europe. I can remember gazing with incredulity at Coca-Cola advertising in Italy ten years ago. All the standard symbols of the American small-town version of *"la dolce vita"* were displayed in Genoa and Milan. Long-legged blonde girls in very short shorts sat on high drug-store stools enjoying "the pause that refreshes." I thought how totally unsuitable to the Italian environment and social habits this type of advertising was. Yet if Coca-Cola advertising has adjusted itself a little to French and Italian ways of thought and life, French and Italian ways of life have adjusted themselves to American habits. Perhaps "Coca-colonisation" was not a totally mythical danger. In Islamic countries, of course, Coca-Cola has met a very long-felt need, and there is no overt lobby of *"bouilleurs de cru"* to oppose the spread of the new habit.

I do not know what are the figures for sales in Britain, but it does not seem to have had the same impact as in some other European countries. Before the war (a fact probably unknown in Atlanta) Coca-Cola mixed with vodka was a smart drink among certain young men at Oxford. As Mr. Kahn reminds us, there was a popular song *"Rum and Coca-Cola,"* and although the Coca-Cola Company is deeply Methodist in its ethos and is in the heart of the Bible belt, its rulers have had to take notice of the possibilities of using Coca-Cola as what the Americans call "a mixer." Thus Coca-Cola took

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away the taste of vodka and vodka took away the taste of Coca-Cola thus producing an ideal drink for young men who wanted a kick.

Naturally many superstitions have grown up around this great national institution. These Mr. Kahn discusses sympathetically. There is, for example, the belief that Coca-Cola is a contraceptive (on the West Coast this magic power is more commonly attributed to *7 Up*.) There are also legends, not all of them dealt with in this book, about the varying formulas used in the making of Coca-Cola. It is a firmly-held belief of many Americans that at one time Coca-Cola contained a high proportion of coca, the basis of cocaine, and was in fact a habit-forming drug. Whether this fairy tale did the company good or harm is hard to say. At any rate it was proof of the place that Coca-Cola has in American folklore. The dazzling success of Coca-Cola produced rivals of which the most famous and successful is Pepsi-Cola. The law on the rights of the Coca-Cola Company in their name is extremely complicated and has provided a good living for metaphysically-minded lawyers. There are imitations in other parts of the world. There is, for example, Hamburg Kola which Mr. Kahn does not mention. This I have drunk on the Elbe in a spirit of scientific curiosity. On its merits I shall make no comment.

It is not being fantastic to suggest that Coca-Cola with its advertising, its support for the myth of the innocent revelry of American young people (no beatniks they) is an edifying force in American life. It is also a point worth noting (and not stressed enough by Mr. Kahn) that the parent company is the only great Southern industrial combination which is under Southern control. Coca-Cola may be a force for colonisation in France, but it is a demonstration of decolonisation in the South. It has been the most effective revenge for Appomattox, and about the last thing one can conceive of being drunk by General Grant.

D. W. Brogan

Igor Stravinsky

Memories and Commentaries. By IGOR STRAVINSKY and ROBERT CRAFT. *Faber*, 25s.

Stravinsky. By ROMAN VLAD. *Oxford*, 30s.

BERTHA from East Prussia presided over the Stravinsky nursery in St. Petersburg, and for almost thirty years, from the time of the early Diaghilev ballets until 1939, Stravinsky himself lived either in France or in the French-

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speaking canton of Vaud. Thus English is in effect his fourth language, and when in 1914 Beecham introduced him to Delius, Stravinsky records that conversation was difficult (just as well, perhaps) because "I spoke almost no English." In fact his first real encounter with a language notorious for its subtle and meaningful imprecision cannot have begun before Stravinsky settled in America at the age of fifty-eight.

Yet every sentence of these conversations with Robert Craft is stamped with individual style. If so cunning and relaxed a master of the English language as E. M. Forster had produced a book of this sort, even he would have been hard put to produce anything more succinct, precise, and elegantly informal. Yet there are critics who complain of Stravinsky's setting of English in *The Rake's Progress* and the *Cantata* (*1952*) and imply that he does not really understand his adopted language.

It is remarkable how closely his literary style reflects the qualities of his music. There is the same abhorrence of vagueness, the same concision and clarity and, above all, a concreteness, as though he had chiselled at every phrase until all looseness and superfluous detail had vanished. When he comes to musical conceptions, like the nature of chromaticism, no pupil of Professor Gilbert Ryle could dissect the matter in hand with more surgical precision. Yet the result is far from dry or mandarinesque. On the contrary his reminiscing exactly catches the feeling of conversation.

> Fokine was easily the most disagreeable man I have ever worked with. In fact, with Glazunov, he was the most disagreeable man I have ever met; but Glazunov was a time-to-time drunkard which redeemed him—from time-to-time; he would lock his door for two-week binges on Château Yquem! Imagine bingeing on Château Yquem! . . .

And what memories! Oddly enough, these are richer in the fields of art and literature than of music. Stravinsky was, of course, a pupil of Rimsky-Korsakov and he has a good deal to say about that in this book. He had a cordial relationship with Debussy and was a friend of Ravel in the years before the First World War, but since then he has not shown much interest in other great musicians. For years in America he lived virtually next door to the only other 20th-century composer of his stature, Arnold Schoenberg, yet it seems that they scarcely met during this period of their lives. Planets do not encircle each other, and if in this case they had tried to do so, it would probably not have yielded a harmony of the spheres. Apart from their musical differences, disciples had built great theological systems in which the other man was always anti-pope, rather as the followers of

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Wagner and Brahms formed rival schools. And then there would have been differences of background and temperament. One of Schoenberg's children said to me, "The atmosphere at home was always very *German* and the Stravinskys were so smart and cosmopolitan." What is sadder is that, until Robert Craft entered the scene (he also knew Schoenberg) there is said to have been no single score by Schoenberg in Stravinsky's library, and, as one might expect, no score by Stravinsky in Schoenberg's.

But in every other artistic field Stravinsky has shown an unerring sense of quality. Perhaps it was his long and intimate association with Diaghilev that gave him this nose for what was good in the sister arts. Even without Diaghilev's influence it is difficult to imagine Stravinsky accepting literary collaborators as mediocre as satisfied Schoenberg in *Von Heute auf Morgen* and *Erwartung*. For *Oedipus Rex* he chose Cocteau, for *Persephone*, Gide, for *The Rake's Progress*, Auden; and only Dylan Thomas's death prevented their collaboration in an opera, although how Stravinsky would have weathered that verbal effusion remains an interesting question.

Few men can have known and worked with more of the great creative figures of the first half of the 20th century, and now that he has outlived most of them he looks back and remembers. Yet there is no nostalgic hue to these reminiscences. Only in references to his native land does one seem to detect some deep, unspoken longing. "What did you love most in Russia?" asks Craft. The answer is memorable: "The violent Russian spring that seemed to begin in an hour and was like the whole earth cracking. That was the most wonderful event of every year of my childhood." But as for the rest, "the real answer to your questions about my childhood is that it was a period of waiting for the moment when I could send it and everything connected with it to hell...."

The same trenchancy marks his comments on the great men he has known. He clearly did not feel any real affinity with André Gide (Paul Valéry was his literary hero). This mild antipathy was not discouraged by the fact that Gide thought that he knew a thing or two about music. ("That Gide knew nothing whatever about music in general is apparent to anyone who has read his *Notes on Chopin*," Stravinsky comments sharply.) Yet he entirely failed to understand the composer's intentions in *Persephone* and, it seems, even to attend a single performance. His "protestant manias" made little appeal to Stravinsky. "He was not grand enough as a creator," he observes, "to make us forget the sins of his nature—as Tolstoy can make us forget the sins of his nature." Colla-

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boration with Auden ("a very gentle and lovable bloodhound, however super-intellectual") proved altogether more enjoyable.

This small book is largely taken up with reminiscences, of the Russian composers of his youth, of the Diaghilev ballet and of various friends and collaborators. Its tone is often frankly gossipy, yet Stravinsky's comments often have a sharpness, humour, and humanity that transcend mere chat. A short section devoted to "some musical questions" touches on a number of matters of interest. In it Stravinsky again pays homage to Anton Webern ("He is a perpetual Pentecost for all who believe in music"). He again shows his interest in and respect for the music of Boulez and Stockhausen (perhaps it is easier to be open-minded about one's grandchildren than one's children), he talks briefly about his recent music and there is the customary rap over the knuckles for conductors and critics. There are also a number of splendid photographs.

Mr. Roman Vlad's book bears the bold inscription, " 'I am convinced that this is the best study of my music which has yet appeared in any country'—Igor Stravinsky." That hardly flatters the others, for this is a disappointing affair that Mr. Vlad has run up from a series of broadcast scripts. The amount of space allotted to works seems arbitrary and sometimes bears little relation to their importance, and the same is true of individual movements. Thus the opening *moderato* of the *Symphony in C* is discussed in some detail, while the remaining movements get a bare mention.

Nor can this unbalanced treatment be attributed to the fact that Mr. Vlad is using individual works as illustrations of a thesis. On the contrary, his book lacks any guiding line, although he sometimes throws out an interesting idea, such as that Stravinsky's output in the neo-classical period can be divided into works that show "unquestioning faith" and those that are essentially diversions; a questionable thesis, but at any rate a stimulating notion. Mr. Vlad is generally at his best in the discussion of the religious works, although he occasionally gets entangled in metaphysical speculation that is not rendered more palatable by an inelegant style. Occasionally there are remarks that startle, such as the observation that a stage (as opposed to a concert) performance of *Oedipus Rex* is "not entirely without purpose."

In view of the patchy quality of this book it is odd that Mr. Vlad should have chosen to make a slyly derogatory remark about Mr. Eric Walter White's infinitely more conscientious study, now unhappily out of date.

Peter Heyworth

LESSON 4

The Great Seal in the London Zoo.

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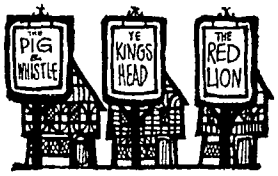

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The Eye-Witness Fallacy

THE DARKEST of Dark Ages is surely ours, not owing to a paucity of documentation, but to a super-abundance. The wood cannot be seen for the trees. So many participants and ostensible eye-witnesses have had their say, often at unconscionable length. The fat Memoirs, Journals, Biographies, and Autobiographies accumulate, as do the mountainous, yellowing files of newspapers and magazines. Trying to reconstruct the recent past from them, one finds oneself trapped, like Jonah in his whale, in a dark, cavernous stomach of print. The record of our times is plenteously and minutely available, but so confused, so contradictory, so tainted with conscious and unconscious deception, prejudice, and self-justification, as to produce, in its final effect, only a blur. There is a thronging cast, all concerned to speak their lines with the maximum effect, but no discernible play. Only a spectacular without sequence or plot.

One is the more grateful, therefore, for any attempt to package and cellophane-wrap selected portions of this vast documentation. What gives acute indigestion taken as a meal can be painlessly consumed, in cereal form, as a breakfast-food. Two volumes in this *genre* have lately come into my hands—*They Saw It Happen*, compiled by Professor Asa Briggs,[1] and *Eye-Witness*, selected and edited by Mr. John Fisher.[2] The former is subtitled "An Anthology of Eye-witnesses' Accounts of Events in British History 1897–1940," and the latter "An Anthology of British Reporting." Professor Briggs begins with an account by H. W. Lucy, the famous Toby M.P. of *Punch*, of the moving of the Royal Address on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. He ends with Sir Winston Churchill's first appearance in the House of Commons as Prime Minister, on May 13th, 1940, as described by Harry Boardman, for many years the writer of the *Guardian*'s Parliamentary Sketch. Mr. Fisher's collection ranges from the *Times*'s report of Napoleon's departure for St. Helena after his defeat at Waterloo, to the *Daily Telegraph*'s of Khrushchev's huge, turbulent Press conference in Paris last May, when the Summit Conference failed to take place. Where Professor Briggs' sources are varied, Mr. Fisher's are exclusively journalistic.

For one who, like myself, has been professionally engaged for the last thirty-five years in reporting and commenting upon the contemporary scene, compilations like these have a more than passing interest. How far, one asks oneself, can eye-witness reports of the kind chosen by Professor Briggs and Mr. Fisher be accepted as objectively true? Considered as historical evidence, what degree of credibility may be accorded them? At some of the scenes described I was myself present. Quite a number of the eye-witnesses adduced, more particularly in Mr. Fisher's volume, I have known and liked; trailed round with them from Abadan to Little Rock, from Nairobi to Singapore; sat in bars gossiping, laughing, speculating on how the day's hard-won story will fare at the hands of sub-editors. To consider whether these jovial companions may be regarded as witnesses of truth implies no reflection on them. Reporters, like players in an orchestra, must keep a wary eye on the conductor. Moreover, there is some basis for the distinction, constantly made in Soviet apologetics, between subjective and objective truth. Take, for instance, Rousseau, who was convinced that his *Confessions* were, as he claimed, entirely truthful. In fact, for the most part, they consisted of fabrications, often to his own discredit. Nonetheless, the *Confessions* remain an enchanting exercise in self-revelation. Again, Harold Laski was one of the most elaborate and audacious liars I have ever known. He is still, however, and I daresay rightly, regarded as an accomplished and perceptive scholar, whose testimony about his times deserves consideration, and sometimes quotation.

Professor Briggs includes an extract from George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* by way of covering the Spanish Civil War. The book is a fine one, perhaps, apart from *Animal Farm*, Orwell's finest, and Orwell himself was considered by his friends and admirers (among whom I count myself) as being ardently truthful, to the point of awkwardness. Yet a closer examination of his writings discloses grotesque inaccuracies in what purport to be objective descriptions. For example, his account of Kentish hop-pickers and hop-picking. Or his account of working-class life in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (also quoted by Professor Briggs), which is simply the fruit of an Etonian's reading of Dickens, Gissing, and other late-Victorian novelists, and *The News of the World*—incidentally, Orwell's favourite newspaper. Or, for that matter, his account in *Down and Out in Paris*, of being a waiter. This, according to a professional I consulted, is quite ludicrously inexact. Orwell, in fact, was neither Down nor Out, in any true sense of the terms. Like all who have strong convictions and creative imaginations, he saw what he wanted to see, and became what he wanted to be. His own authentic being was abolished with Blair. Thereafter, he lived and reacted as the Orwell he had invented. They ever must believe a lie who see with, not through, the eye, Blake wrote. Orwell saw with the glass eye he had fixed into Blair's skull. And he believed the lies this glass eye registered with all the deep, dry fervour of a passionately truthful nature.

ANOTHER of Professor Briggs' eye-witnesses who has, for me, a particular interest, is Beatrice Webb. Her *Journal*, so elegantly written

[1] Basil Blackwell, 30s.
[2] Cassell, 25s.

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and diverting, so full of "inside information" and undertones of malice, may well be regarded by posterity as a basic document of this age. As one who knew her, and was present at some of the occasions described in the *Journal*, I should be hesitant about thus accepting her testimony at its face value. She was a woman with strong and fluctuating sentiments, especially where people were concerned, and adjusted her account of encounters and conversations with them accordingly. The melancholic disposition of a frustrated mystic (especially operative in the small hours of the morning, when she was accustomed to write up her *Journal*) coloured and distorted her impressions. In her earlier anti-communist days, she found Marxists, in particular Soviet ones, personally repugnant and politically derisory. When she decided, with her Consort, Sidney, to abase herself before the Soviet régime, they became creatures of light and virtue. Her fine intelligence was dedicated, in the closing years of her life, to upholding the monstrous falsehoods of Soviet propaganda, and to justifying the monstrous cruelties of Stalin's rule. All this is understandable and tragic in personal terms, but what about the chronicler? Can the Journal of the inspirer and part-author of *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation* be accepted as valid historical evidence?

A Beatrice Webb or George Orwell deceive themselves; journalists are paid to deceive others. To succeed in their profession, they must get on to the front page, the way to which, more often than not, is paved with bad intentions. One is covering, let us say, a G.A.T.T. conference in Geneva for one of Lord Beaverbrook's newspapers. Idle, then, if one's story is ever to see the light of day, to make it other than derisory. Lord Beaverbrook does not care for G.A.T.T. Or, again, one is covering for the *Guardian* a revolt against British rule in some colonial territory. Equally idle to file except on the supposition that revolt is justified. Liberalism requires that anyone who murders a British soldier is a hero, and anyone who is murdered by a British soldier is a martyr. Our enemies are always admirable, our friends (a diminishing band) despicable.

THE PERVERSIONS OF PRINCIPLE, alas, are liable to be more deleterious than those of self-interest and sycophancy. The Rev. C. F. Andrews, in the days of C. P. Scott, used to report on India in the *Manchester Guardian*. He was a bearded, earnest man, of saintly ways, and deeply devoted to Indians and India. His reporting was deeply coloured with his own expectations and hopes; his prognostications, as I recall them, have all been falsified by events.[3] The very fact that a reporter like Andrews is so sincere, and, in his own estimation, so truthful, makes his falsifications the more acceptable. After all, when Lord Beaverbrook drove his editorial and reporting chain-gang into demonstrating in the late thirties, that there would be no war, the fraud was too palpable to convince any but the most gullible of his readers.

It is sad to reflect that the more reputable the eye-witness, the greater the caution with which his testimony should be received. In the post-war years, the *Times* correspondence from Eastern and Central Europe tended to reflect Communist sympathies on the same principle, presumably, that induced Geoffrey Dawson, when he was Editor, on his own confession to strive to keep out of the newspaper's columns anything which would displease the Third Reich's Nazi bosses. Such distortion, just because it appears in the *Times*, is more effective than the ravings of a Northcliffe or Rothermere or Beaverbrook. The accomplished, the opinionated, the reputable writer, liable by virtue of these very qualities to see what he wants to see and hear what he wants to hear, will easily persuade and delude, where the hack's obviously slanted reporting gets disregarded. Out of righteousness and sincerity have come more deception than out of villainy and deliberate conceit. The tabloid Press, with many readers, deludes few. Serious newspapers like the *Times* and the *Guardian*, with fewer readers, delude many.

IN 1932–33, when I was a reporter in Moscow, far the most distinguished and famous of the foreign journalists there was Walter Duranty. His despatches appeared in the esteemed *New York Times*, prominently displayed among All the News That Is Fit to Print. He briefed visiting notabilities; the State Department and the Foreign Office paid heed to his views and account of Soviet conditions. As an eye-witness, he was pre-eminent. The story on which we were all, at that time, mainly engaged was the collectivisation of agriculture, which Stalin had ordered should be carried through whatever the consequences. Duranty reported that, far from there being any famine as a result of collectivisation, the granaries were bursting, the milk-maids were apple-cheeked, the peasants were stuffing themselves with good things. Photographs and documentary films in the same sense were made plenteously available by the Soviet authorities, and widely distributed and used. All this was totally untrue. There was an appalling famine. I saw it myself, and a far more eminent eye-witness than I—none other than Mr. Khrushchev—has admitted its existence, and dwelt upon its horrors. Yet Duranty's despatches exist still, in the *New York Times* files, doubtless one day to be extracted by some future Professor Briggs or Mr. Fisher as eye-witness reports of unimpeachable reliability. As a drinking companion Duranty was delightful. In private conversation, he was cynical, amusing and shrewd. In the respectable and solemn columns of the newspaper he served he planted monstrous falsehoods, capable of misleading posterity as they misled his contemporaries. Like

[3] He believed, for instance, that moderates like Scrinivasa Sastri and Jayakar wielded influence, whereas, of course, they sank without trace when the show-down came; that the Congress leaders were wedded to non-violence, and would be satisfied with Dominion Status, and that Jinnah's Moslem League would readily participate in an All-India Government. Once he told me that he saw a close resemblance between Gandhi's trial by the British and Christ's by Pilate.

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the evil that men do, the falsehoods that they tell live after them; their truths are usually interred with their bones.

IN ASSESSING THE RELIABILITY of the reporting of foreign correspondents, it is necessary to consider their circumstances—a corrective which is too little applied, doubtless because, except among professionals, it is too little understood. Correspondent A. is stationed in the capital of a monolithic Communist State. He has, perhaps, a wife or a mistress of the country. On the whole, his life there is congenial. He wants to stay. Black Market currency, at a more advantageous rate than appears in his expense accounts, enables him to be relatively affluent. He knows that, as is the case with all foreigners, especially those not enjoying diplomatic immunity, it would be easy for the authorities to trump up plausible charges against him to get him expelled, or even arrested. In such countries, normal journalistic activities can be presented as espionage, normal capitalistic "fiddling" as a crime against the State. Small wonder, then, that he finds it expedient to be on good terms with the authorities, which means, in practice, that his tussles with the censorship are shadow-boxing, and that he is, to a greater or lesser extent, available as a channel for propaganda. Such is his situation inside the country. Outside, even in the discerning eyes of a Professor Briggs or Mr. Fisher, he rates as an eye-witness. Whereas exiles or émigrés are suspect, his *bona fides* are impeccable. He knows because he has seen. His reports are from the horse's mouth. They carry the authentic stamp of a date-line—that treacherous beacon lighting the way to so much falsification, though news-editors have no choice but to chart their course by it.

Correspondent B. is stationed in one of the capitals of what we like to call the Free World; let us say Washington. He naturally and necessarily has friends on Capitol Hill, from whom he gets news, and who, in return, deserve consideration in his dispatches. His contacts in the White House and the State Department are no less important to him, and can only be nourished by, to some extent, refraining from treading on their corns or troubling their ulcers. No exclusives fall to the awkward squad. His own Embassy is an important source of news. The Ambassador will scarcely be available for one of those cosy, private chats, so helpful in making a good appearance in tomorrow's paper, if yesterday's contained matter displeasing to him. The pressures are more subtle and gentle than in the monolithic Communist State; the brain-washing is done with rose water and delicately scented soap. But still there are pressures, there is brain-washing.

Correspondent C. is a rover. He moves from trouble-spot to trouble-spot, arriving in Baghdad or Laos with the necessity upon him to file an authoritative story within twenty-four hours. It is a challenge, an opportunity. He sees his by-line in large black type; observes in his mind's eye the cross-heads and slabs of solid print in which his story is set forth. Who will fill him in before it is too late for the first edition? There is always a bar where others similarly bent congregate; there are always stringers, thank God for them—underlings in the trade, whose meagre earnings are often supplemented from government, or other public or private funds in return for services rendered. No matter. How do you spell it, old boy—"KASSEM"—"BOUN OUM." Thanks, old boy. The story is duly confectioned. It duly appears. Once more Our Special Correspondent is on the spot, and first with the news.

Either A. or B. or C., especially if he happens to write as elegantly as Alistair Cooke, as vividly as René McColl, or as forcefully as Sefton Delmer, can provide precious pabulum for a Professor Briggs or Mr. Fisher. After all, they are indubitably eye-witnesses.

MR. FISHER includes in *Eye-Witness* an account by Maurice Fagence of the *Daily Herald*, of the sentencing of the Nuremberg War Criminals. Had he turned to the late *News Chronicle* for the subsequent scenes at the scaffold, he would have found an equally vivid report of Goering's execution, his demeanour and last words being faithfully recorded. In fact, of course, as Goering took his own life he never was executed. So what? It is a fine piece of writing by an eye-witness. Take, again, another of Mr. Fisher's choices, A. J. Cummings' report, also in the *News Chronicle*, of the close of the Metro-Vickers Trial in Moscow. As Cummings saw it, the opening stages of the trial were "a model of calmness and correctitude." Vishinsky, who was to become famous as the bullying prosecutor of old Bolshevik comrades when they were at his mercy, was "a man of great culture," and the Judge, Ulrich, a toady so obsequiously disposed towards the shifting ferocity of Stalin's terrorism that he managed to survive the purges, "might be mistaken in England for a middle-class stockbroker with a benevolent outlook on the world at large." Cummings was an intelligent, likeable man, who prided himself on his journalistic integrity. I have no wish to malign his memory. Even so, as a Moscow eye-witness he seems to me, to put it mildly, of doubtful validity. From conversations with him towards the end of his life, I would deduce that he would then have agreed with this judgment. Mr. Fisher, however, deems otherwise, and who shall blame him? Cummings is a reputable name, and the *News Chronicle* was a reputable newspaper.

AFTER THE NUREMBERG and Metro-Vickers trials, it is interesting to turn to J. E. Dillon's report, in the *Daily Telegraph*, of Dreyfus's second trial in 1899. Whether or not Dillon over-dramatised the scene, I have no means of knowing, but at least his reaction to Dreyfus's conviction was one of honest indignation. He resented the perversion of law in order to cover up the obnoxious racialism of a military élite, and saw that this perversion was a much graver matter than the trial itself. No such reaction is apparent in the case of the reports of the Nuremberg and Moscow trials. Cummings found no difficulty in accepting a grotesque parody

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of judicial procedure as the genuine article. At Nuremberg, as far as I know, no eye-witness pointed out that for Western judges to sit side by side with Soviet ones, and convict Germans of using forced labour and partitioning Poland, was itself a monstrous crime against our civilisation, or, at any rate, a manifestation of its advanced stage of decay.

When Napoleon was dispatched to St. Helena, according to the already-mentioned *Times* report, he was treated coldly, but not subjected to moral exhortations; not adjudged guilty of war-crimes. It sufficed that he had been defeated. If there is any crime in war, it lies, surely, in waging war at all. Criminality cannot be only on the side of the vanquished. To pretend that it can is to connive at the destruction of law itself. In Professor Briggs' and Mr. Fisher's parade of eye-witnesses, one may detect, indeed, a progressive deterioration in their moral, if not in their literary or journalistic, calibre. Grey's account of the outbreak of the 1914–18 War, for instance, is greatly to be preferred to Churchill's over-blown rhetoric[4]; as eye-witnesses, Amery, and even Templewood (Samuel Hoare), strike one as being preferable to Dalton and Morrison.

FOR MYSELF, I find it difficult to see how truth could ever be extracted from this plethora of eye-witnesses, whose ostensible credentials are so impressive, but whose testimony is so dubious. The rugged, honest David Kirkwood said in the House of Commons that, during the economic depression, the Clydeside unemployed never tasted meat. Bertrand Russell has recounted how, during the McCarthy period in the United States, all books about Russia were removed from public and university libraries, and destroyed. Sir Julian Huxley, after a visit to Russia, wrote that Stalin was in the habit of going down to the railway marshalling-yards, and lending a hand there. "They are queueing up in Gorky Street to buy cars," a *Times* Special Correspondent began a dispatch from Moscow. Bread, Mrs. Naomi Mitchison wrote in the *Guardian*, would assuredly soon be free in the Soviet Union. Such absurdities abound, relating to all countries, all régimes, all the desiderata of our time, and all bearing the eye-witness hall-mark. It is not surprising that Pilate did not wait for an answer when he asked his famous question: "What is truth?" He, too, had doubtless been studying eye-witnesses' reports, including, of course, that of Judas Iscariot.

Malcolm Muggeridge

[4] Thus Grey: "The real reason for going into the war was that, if we did not stand by France and stand up for Belgium against this aggression, we should be isolated, discredited, and hated: and there would be before us nothing but a miserable and ignoble future."

And Churchill: "Once more now in the march of centuries Old England was to stand forth in battle against the mightiest thrones and dominations. Once more in defence of the liberties of Europe and the common right must she enter upon a voyage of great toil and hazard across waters uncharted, towards coasts unknown, guided only by the stars. Once more 'the far-off line of storm-beaten ships' was to stand between the Continental Tyrant and the dominion of the world."

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

A Poet in Jail

"Thought consists in a search for truth; life in a search for advantage. These two ideals represent opposite poles to anyone who must choose between them...."

"Every student in Russia who has arrived at philosophical scepticism by his own thinking can consider himself a new Columbus...."

"There is no freedom of the press... but who can say there is no freedom of thought?"

A YEAR AND A HALF ago a young Russian poet and logician named Aleksandr Sergeyevich Yesenin-Volpin, fearing arrest because his work had already displeased the authorities, sat down and wrote an essay boldly entitled *A Free Philosophical Treatise* and gave the essay and copies of his poems to friends, requesting that the manuscript be published in the West and that, in doing so, his true name be used. He was arrested shortly thereafter and taken to prison. The Soviet régime claims that there are no longer political prisoners in the U.S.S.R. Therefore, as in the case of his previous political arrest, Yesenin-Volpin has been detained on the euphemistic charge of "mental instability."

The poems and the essay are one of the most important documents to come from Russia. They express a deep personal love of freedom which is characteristic of a whole new generation of rebellious Soviet youth. The following introductory remarks written in 1959 by Yesenin-Volpin himself give us an insight into his writings, personality, and motivations:

"SINCE 1947 I have written very little, and that only when the atmosphere of spiritual oppression has upset my balance.

"In 1949, I was arrested mainly because of my poems entitled *I Never Put My Hands to Ploughing* and *The Raven*, which were reported to the organs of State Security.

"I was adjudged 'irresponsible' and locked up in the psychiatric prison in Leningrad. In the autumn of 1950, I was sent to Karaganda for five years. I was freed during the amnesty following the death of Stalin.

"As to the official version of my irresponsibility, may I suggest that the reader judge my intellectual capacities from my scientific works and my poems. My so-called 'irresponsibility' did not prevent me from successfully defending my Ph.D. candidacy a few weeks before my arrest and at the very time when evidence against me was being collected.

"Actually, only a morally and mentally defective person can fail to reach a stage of extreme indignation in the Soviet Union. If this were not so, the Communists would have no reason to seal up their borders. In no other way could they have dealt with their flock while using Stalinist methods. Now the methods have changed, but not radically. The main point is that even that relative freedom which we have gained (a level of freedom which would seem to a person from another country to be the most shameful slavery) was not won by our society itself, but was granted to it by the government, or, more accurately, by the Communist church, as a sort of cat-and-mouse game with the people, rather than for the sake of more civilised rule. And then only because Stalin's successors have lacked the imagination and courage to follow further in the footsteps of their teacher.

"I ask the people in the West into whose hands these verses will stray to remember the fate which awaits me if some of them should be published. This applies especially to the poems *The Heart is Broken* and *O Fellow Citizens, Cows, and Oxen*, for which, strange as it may seem, I could be accused of 'incitement to war.' (Incidentally, the absurdity of such accusations is very well understood even by the accusers themselves. Our deepest tragedy consists of this unprecedented and universal hypocrisy.)

"I do not shrink from this fate because, in our country, I am only pleased with my conduct when I feel that I have been able to bring the hypocrites and weaklings into confusion. I shall be very pleased if my poems will see the light of day in the West; of course, I do not want to force them on anyone, and I myself do not consider everything in them successful. But I should like certain of my works from the latest period to be published first. In them is my justification for having written almost no poetry since 1951. When these works are finished and their publication arranged for, I shall go calmly to jail, if they should insist on it, in the knowledge that they had failed to conquer me.

"The publication of the poems written before August, 1946, does not endanger me with arrest here. Of the poetry written after this date, the poems mentioned above carry the greatest threat of this kind, as do also, to a lesser degree, the poems entitled *The Raven* and *Fronde* (because into them might be read a hint of incitement to rebellion) and, to a lesser degree, *There Is No Freedom* and *Yesterday I Still Frolicked in the Meadow*.

"The poems *A Leaf of Spring*, *I Looked at the World Upside Down*, and *As a Child I Did Not Play with Children* can all be published in the West without risk of my being arrested here. I do not even take into consideration less severe forms of punishment (since, unfortunately, I cannot count on getting an exit visa anyway).

"If I should be arrested for any reason whatsoever, I emphatically request that everything considered worthy of publication should be published. Under Soviet law this would not significantly lengthen the term of my sentence.

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"In any case, I insist upon absolutely no changes in the text if it be published in Russian.

"There is no freedom of the press in Russia . . . but who will maintain that there is no freedom of thought there . . . ?"

ALEKSANDR Sergeyevich Yesenin-Volpin is a Soviet citizen who normally lives in Moscow. He is the natural son of Sergey Yesenin (or Essenin) [1895–1925], the famous lyrical poet who was at the height of his popularity in the period following the October Revolution of 1917. His mother, Nadezhda Volpin, is known as a woman of culture and a translator into Russian of many works from the French and the English.

Sergey Yesenin, the author's father, was a peasant genius and a contemporary of Boris Pasternak and Vladimir Mayakovsky. He had a natural lyrical gift and is generally considered to be one of the most gifted Russian poets since Pushkin. His poetry has been praised by critics as diverse as Maxim Gorky and Pasternak. Of him, Pasternak has said:

> Since the days of Koltsov, Russia has not produced anything so native, natural, appropriate, and inalienable as Sergey Yesenin. . . . At the same time, Yesenin was a living, palpitating particle of that spirit of pure art which, after Pushkin, we call the highest Mozartean principle. . . .

Sergey Yesenin, who had erroneously accepted the October Revolution as a realisation of the old peasant dream of a rural Russia in which the peasantry was to own the land, soon found himself in a tragic dilemma as a poet of nature in conflict with the new industrial theories of the Bolsheviks and with the ideological tenets of Marxist philosophy. His refusal to knuckle under to Marxism made his later life—and poetry—tragic. As Maxim Gorky wrote in 1927:

> This was a deeply instructive drama and of no less worth than Yesenin's poetry. Never had the village in conflict with the city smashed its head so effectively and torturingly. This drama will repeat itself often.

Indeed, Yesenin had proclaimed in one of his poems: "I am the last of village poets." In defending his position until his death, Yesenin also defended the freedom of poetical inspiration. In public he often behaved in an "undisciplined" manner and, in the middle of the Terror, he had been known to wear a top hat and patent leather shoes—the symbols at that time of the persecuted capitalist. As a result, he was often in trouble, but he somehow managed to survive and write until his own suicide. In 1923, he wrote:

> *My hovel will fall down without me,*
> *And my old dog died long ago,*
> *God has condemned me to perish . . .*
> *On Moscow's contorted streets.*

This note of a devil-may-care challenge to destiny and the tribulations of his life, and the emotional, tragic content of his poetry, proved extraordinarily "infectious" in those grim, uncertain, and heroic years. Yesenin's poetry had therefore a tremendous impact on the population, and particularly on the youth. An enormous crowd of people, numbering tens of thousands, followed his body to the cemetery. The "infectiousness" of his poetry even alarmed the Soviet authorities, and a campaign was started to counteract the influence of "a dangerous political disease." In fact, little of his work was republished until 1959–1960, when, at last, advertisements have appeared of a complete edition of the works. This itself is symptomatic of new and somewhat freer trends, of a more critical attitude among the readers of the younger generation, and of a somewhat increased maturity which insists on facing the facts of the immediate past.

THIS SERGEY YESENIN, THE FATHER of the present poet, was born in 1895 in a small village in the province of Ryazan in central Russia. His early youth was spent in the impoverished environment of a small peasant family. After receiving some education in an ecclesiastical school, he came to Moscow in 1912. His poetry soon became known in the literary circles of Moscow and Petersburg, where he was lionised as a "village prodigy." The critics acclaimed the purity, freshness, and originality of his verse. By 1918, he headed the Imagist group of poets. Essentially a pastoral poet, he had also a strain of typically Russian mysticism and messianism which are perhaps best exemplified in the poem *Inonia* (1918). His genius finally developed strongly tragic overtones under the impact of the city and the Revolution. Instead of resolving his contradictions, he dramatised them. In 1922, Yesenin married the famous American dancer Isadora Duncan. He travelled with her in Europe and the United States, but the Western world provided no solution to his problems. He returned to Moscow in 1924. In the grip of increasing disillusionment, Yesenin dramatised his isolation and compared himself to a tracked beast. In the theoretical and practical atmosphere of Soviet Communism, his spiritual values appeared increasingly superfluous. The crisis came in 1925. On December 28 of that year, the conflict between the ideal world of the "village poet" and Soviet reality culminated in his suicide. After slashing his wrists, he wrote a farewell poem in blood, then hanged himself from a radiator pipe in a room of the Hotel Angleterre in Leningrad.

Sergey Yesenin's powerful lyric genius was prompted by his passionate, nostalgic love for his Ryazan countryside and the soil of "Mother Russia." His poetry—sometimes pastoral and pietistic, sometimes tragic and even blasphemous—became increasingly poignant and memorable not only because of its natural simplicity, exquisite melody, and deep feeling for nature, but also because of a sense of tragic destiny, personal as well as public.

ALEKSANDR YESENIN-VOLPIN, some of whose work is presented below, has evidently inherited some of his father's poetic talent and

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freedom of attitude. As a poet, it must be admitted, he is less consistent and less talented than was his father. His bravery is never in doubt and he has written some memorable lines. His poetic activity thus far has been much interrupted and is, as he himself notes, secondary to his major interest of mathematical and philosophical speculation. In this latter sphere he has a daring and unorthodox mind, which is indeed reflected in the poems written between 1941 and 1951. In these poems, the early ones especially, we also find a pastoral strain, but the element of novelty which distinguishes some of the other poems is not so much any technical innovation or any extraordinary command of language or creative construction as it is an astonishingly honest critical attitude and a deep-rooted sense of irony. In fact, judging from the poems as well as the *Treatise*, we are confronted in Yesenin-Volpin with a complex personality, both poetically emotional and deeply rational. The personality of the son, like that of the father, is faced by the problem of isolation. The problem, however, is presented and discussed in a different way. Yesenin-Volpin attempts to resolve it philosophically, as in his *Treatise*. He is, above all, concerned with the problem of truth, and in this domain he arrives at an extreme point of scepticism. It is a scepticism which, however modern and nihilistic it may seem, is also fundamentally Socratic, since he is prepared to stake his life on his right to be a sceptic. This is, of course, an extremely dangerous position to defend in the Soviet Union, where collective conformity is not only an ideal but also a *must*. In this way, Yesenin-Volpin is an example of the rebellious, anti-dogmatic spirit which characterises at least some of the intellectuals of the younger Soviet generation.

Aleksandr Yesenin-Volpin is now thirty-six years of age. He holds a Ph.D. candidate (*Kandidat Nauk*) degree from Moscow University and he has made his living chiefly by writing articles on mathematics and logic, as well as by making translations and abstracts from foreign publications in the Russian, Spanish, Italian, French, German, Portuguese, and English languages. He has never been outside the Soviet Union; and none of his poems have ever been published there. His most recent article was published in the November, 1959, issue of the Soviet publication *Voprosy Filosofii* (*Problems of Philosophy*). Yesenin-Volpin has not been permitted to teach at Moscow University without a Ph.D. degree, but he has conducted a well-attended seminar there on mathematical logic.

During the summer of 1959, Yesenin-Volpin was officially invited by the organising committee of "The Symposium on the Foundations of Mathematics: Infinitistic Method," which was to be held in Warsaw from September 2–8, 1959, under the sponsorship of the Institute of Mathematics of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the International Mathematical Union, to attend as one of several recognised Soviet mathematicians and to present a paper there. As a result, he immediately applied to the appropriate Soviet authorities for permission to go to Warsaw, but his application was rejected out of hand. But despite his inability to travel to Warsaw, his paper entitled *"The Superintuitionistic Programme for the Foundation of Mathematics"* was considered significant enough to be read aloud to the mathematicians assembled at the symposium.

Because of his unorthodox, non-Communist outlook, Yesenin-Volpin experienced at various times, even before his most recent arrest, more serious difficulties with the Soviet authorities. It is reported that he had been arrested and interrogated a number of times by the Soviet security police, and he was, as he himself has said, for a number of years confined in a concentration camp in the Karaganda region.

There is no certainty as to his present whereabouts, except that he is in prison somewhere in Russia.

*

A SOLDIER'S BODY LIES

By the roadside, in a ditch,
A soldier's body lies:
His stiff, uncovered feet
Protrude like wooden sticks.
Like a log, in water soaked,
He lies there in a lilac puddle . . .
You ruthless soldiers—what,
What have you done with death!
. . . Headlong, a drove of horses
Gallops over the endless land;
For a good ten miles from here
The stench makes horses sick;
The soil decays beneath the dead,
And dampened stones glow red;
Not every corpse is laid in boards,
And jackals claim their share . . .
I saw my lucent childhood fears,
The lanterns dimming in the silence.
In the middle of a lofty church
A girl lay in a pile of flowers . . .
The people, gathered by the porch,
Waited for the requiem to begin;
But I stood staring at
The transformation of her face;
But even though her heart had stopped
The tissues still appeared to strive . . .
Then patiently and warmly
A deep voice chanted slowly,
And death gleamed quietly within her
Just as an agate glitters darkly.
. . . In putrid water, like a log,
A soldier's corpse lies stripped and bare.

January 20, 1945

THE RAVEN[1]

Once at night, in time of terror, I was reading
Thomas More,
Lest ignoring his Utopia might be laid at my
own door.

[1] This shortened adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's famous poem, here given an undercurrent of political rebellion, was one of the poems for which Yesenin-Volpin was arrested in 1949.

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In the long, dull exposition I was seeking confirmation
Of arrests for vagrancy in the land exempt from war,
Since this sort of vagrancy necessitates no form of war.
Is he deep, this Thomas More?

...And I pondered on the nation in whose land debased was freedom...
Suddenly I heard a rapping...Who's so late?
A frightful bore!
Racked with doubt and sorrow, I cried: "It could hardly be a friend;
All my friends have been imprisoned...Rather a thief came to the door."
In ecstatic expectation I called: "Thief, come in the door!"
Someone croaked out: "Nevermore!"

All was clear. Of course, it was the ancient Raven. In great haste
I undid the window, saw the stately Raven of before!
In he rushed impatiently, and scrutinised the premises...
In confusion I informed him: "You may sit here on the floor;
In this house we have no Pallas, please be seated on the floor.
There's the floor, and nothing more!

Sullen and ungainly, like a brooding fowl he settled down...
Somehow Pallas was unearthed...I have a heap of bookish lore!
Fluttering, he perched once more; and, black as pitch in his appearance,
Blinked there like a drowsy demon, pecking at the title "More"—
Suddenly aroused, his beak kept pecking at the title "More,"
And pronounced he: "Nevermore!"

I was startled. O, Plutonian! Like a Teuton taciturn!
Perched above, with bitter words my conduct subtly you deplore!
Stop grimacing, wizard bird; reveal at least half of your mind;
Your abyss, how penetrate? For I have feared since time before
Yet another such abyss in realms corrupted long before...
Croaked the Raven: Nevermore!

Raven, Raven! All the planet waits the warrior, not the poet;
In Plutonia you may not quite understand our discord sore!
O, what genius of tomorrow will compose about our strivings
In this age, a crown of creations, making cunning use of folklore,
And most likely, as his subject, our own fancy-fashioned folklore!
And croaked the Raven: Nevermore!

O Prophet, plainly no mere bird! Impatience has a limit;
Then Voltaire comes in most handy, bombs and hatchets what is more.
Now that shame has made us pallid—may it come, though not too soon,
Since the terror's at its summit—will it come, this Thermidor?
...Danton fell, and Robespierre was stricken down by Thermidor!
Croaked the Raven: Nevermore!

O, Prophet, plainly no mere bird! Is there no foreign country,
Where to argue freely about art portends no peril sore?
Shall I ever reach that region, if such be, and not get shot?
In Peru or Netherlands, I'd solve that old contentious chore
Of the realist and romantic still disputing as before!
Croaked the Raven: Nevermore!

"Never, never!" quoth the bird...That foreign land's beyond the sea...
Hereupon in burst two soldiers, drowsy doorman and a major...
I did not click my heels before them, merely spat into a face,
But the Raven, sombre Raven, simply croaked out: Nevermore!
Now I push and push a barrow, keep repeating Nevermore!
*There's no rising...*Nevermore!

February 21, 1948

IN AN ALIEN LAND

In an alien land I grieved,
But I'm back in Moscow now;
Yet, the ingrate that I am,
Not a shade of joy I show.
Bitter memories are gone—
But if my choice had a free hand,
Feasting like a cosmopolitan
I'd rather live in a foreign land.

October 17, 1944

THERE IS NO FREEDOM

"There is no freedom, never was"...
Joke on, my son: I press your hand:
Smite down their power! These jokes amuse
And horrify a father's mind...
Big children do not fear the whip,
And adults lock them up in prison;
But this has no effect at all;
They just don't care, who still are children.
Joke on, my son! Mere sound and fury, yet
I love your fresh and caustic wit,
Though the foe will ridicule your pranks.
As for the friends, they've ceased to care
For what they cannot justify:
The anger of an adult babe!

February 3, 1950

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YESTERDAY I STILL FROLICKED IN THE MEADOW

Yesterday I still frolicked in the meadow,
And, once in bed, I gave no thought to prison;
Yet here I awakened in the Lubyanka
And to this very day I have no notion why.
The soldiers gave me no inkling of a reason,
And no interrogation faced me in the morning . . .
Then, what signifies this menace of the end?
Could it be my partiality to writing?
But what's the point here of "why" and "could it be"!
Everything is obvious without the "why":
Since I'd dispensed with all belief in human aims,
Was it a wonder I was locked up in prison!

I have seen its façade, known its seamy side, too.
But I might claim that nothing would astonish me
If, inside the Lubyanka, a spark of freedom
Would annihilate this unbounded prison!
Because, though routine may crushingly deaden
All those implanted within this nauseous hole,
I'm a spider, and proficient in cobwebs:
Interrogated, I'll invent no lies at all;
With the effluvia of final corruption
I shall infiltrate their minds and protocols!
No trace of a doubt or belief will remain,
No liberty, no Russia, no prison . . .
. . . I have no need of any hope or bait
To make me laugh or grimace before one man!
I'm satisfied: this day, in Lubyanka Street
I have seen with my eyes a famous prison!
All right, but what if I learn far too soon
That I've become involved in a hopeless game?
Why, even then I stand to lose nothing at all
If I happen to suffer a cut and then die . . .
With a gracious look and a triumphant smile,
I shall leave this building of my own good will;
And they will avoid the error of burying
Me, too, in a graveyard where Communists lie!

July, 1949–March, 23, 1951; Lubyanka—Karaganda

Reader

How thoroughly President Kennedy has prepared for his talks with Mr. Macmillan can be guessed from this true Washington story.

On a Sunday afternoon recently a White House aide was peacefully mowing his lawn when the telephone rang. The President urgently wanted the February number of the British magazine ENCOUNTER.

The official, who happened to be a subscriber to it, hurried round to the White House with his own copy and asked Mr. Kennedy which article he wished to see.

It turned out to be one entitled "From Walpole to Macmillan" which offered a far from flattering view of both the first and the recent Prime Ministers.

DAILY TELEGRAPH, *5 April*

LETTERS

"Bombs & Scapegoats"

I WANT TO say first, in the strongest possible terms, that I hold no brief for those who have written in support of me. When I read the letter from Daya and Raj Krishna [ENCOUNTER, March], I felt rather like the Duke of Wellington: I don't know whether they frighten the enemy, but by God they frighten me.

I don't believe that demanding the right to stay alive belongs to "a lower order of morality;" and I suspect that to say that it does is either meaningless or wicked, and quite possibly both. I think it is dangerous nonsense to say that a free way of life is "infinitely" superior to just staying alive; and indeed I find the very expression "a free way of life" æsthetically distasteful and intellectually dishonest. I would far sooner see Communism triumph than the world destroyed—and I believe that anyone who disagrees with me on this point is suffering from a kind of moral leprosy. I disagree bitterly with the C.N.D., but I disagree with it over means, not over ends.

Like Mr. Pennington, I believe that an all-out nuclear war would be "a worse disaster than anything else imaginable" and that "there is great and immediate danger of its occurring." I disagree with his support for the C.N.D. for two reasons, and two reasons only: first, because I see no evidence that unilateral nuclear disarmament by this country will in fact help to avert the danger of nuclear war; and secondly, because I believe that if Britain leaves NATO she will make world disarmament much harder to achieve.

Nuclear war will not be started by this country. It will be started, if at all, by one of the two great nuclear powers. It follows, then, that the most urgent tasks in world politics are to restrain the two great nuclear powers from warlike or provocative policies, and to persuade them to agree to controlled disarmament. But if Britain leaves NATO, she will no longer be in any position to do either of these. She will lose whatever influence she now possesses over her NATO allies. She will increase the influence of the most reactionary circles in the United States, and of the small minority which believes (as the Krishnas appear to do) that universal destruction is preferable to Communism. She will make it harder for President Kennedy to persuade his countrymen to support more conciliatory policies towards the Russians. Above all, she will make Mr. Khrushchev less anxious for a serious disarmament agreement.

Mr. Khrushchev wants disarmament—in so far as he does so at all—because he believes that he has more to gain from it than from the continuation of the arms race. He is still a Communist; he still believes that the laws of history lead inexorably to the triumph of Communism; and he still believes, too, that it is his duty to help history on its way. Fortunately for us, he is intelligent enough to realise that Communism cannot triumph through

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world war, and self-confident enough to believe that it can triumph through what he calls "peaceful co-existence." If he is confronted by a united Western alliance which is anxious to disarm if it can, but willing to continue the arms race if it must, then he is prepared to contemplate disarmament as the lesser evil. But if he had good reason to think that the Western alliance was about to collapse, disarmament would cease to attract him—for he would then calculate that he could make greater gains without it. If Britain leaves NATO, Mr. Khrushchev can hardly fail to conclude that the Western alliance is about to break up; and he might well be right. In those circumstances, his obvious strategy would be to sit tight and make no concessions.

In this context, Mr. Pennington's tortuous metaphor about removing the gunpowder from the kitchen is simply irrelevant. As I understand him, he is arguing that Britain should give up nuclear weapons because, if she did so, she would no longer be a target for nuclear attack and would therefore be safer than she is now. But safety, like peace, is indivisible. Britain *cannot* be safe in an unsafe world; and it is nonsense to talk even of degrees of safety. If nuclear war breaks out in Europe, Britain will be destroyed—whether she belongs to NATO or not. Unilateral disarmament will not widen the English Channel or alter the direction of the prevailing winds across the North Atlantic. If nuclear bombs are exploded in any quantity in Europe or North America, we shall breathe in the radioactive fall-out; and we shall breathe it in just the same even if we no longer belong to NATO.

I admit that disarmament is a two-way affair; and that during the last years of the Eisenhower Administration, the American record was worse than the Russian. But now there are signs of a change. It looks as if President Kennedy really wants some sort of disarmament agreement. If the C.N.D. is telling the truth when it says that its motive is desire for disarmament and not anti-Americanism, then it should at least give President Kennedy the benefit of the doubt for another few months. Soon we shall have an opportunity to judge his sincerity. If he wants an agreement, he can prove it at the Geneva conference on nuclear tests. If, through the fault of the Americans, no agreement is reached at Geneva then I believe that every sincere multilateralist should join the C.N.D. By the same token, if an agreement is signed, those unilateralists who agree with Mr. Pennington and believe that my original article did them an injustice should change their allegiance.

Meanwhile, there can be little doubt that unilateralist agitation harms the cause of disarmament. By opposing *all* forms of nuclear weapons with equal violence, it makes it harder to adopt the safest form available in preference to the most dangerous. By paralysing the Labour Party, it ensures that there is no effective opposition to the Government's defence policy. By constantly denigrating the chances of multilateral disarmament, and insisting that the only choice is between suicide and surrender, it actually brings that choice nearer.

That is why I cannot share Wayland Young's complacent benevolence towards the C.N.D. He seems to regard unilateralists as well-meaning innocents, to be patted gently on their heads because their hearts are pure. This seems to me a profoundly frivolous attitude. Three years ago, when there was no third way between the Sandys White Paper and the C.N.D., there was something to be said for supporting unilateralism as a way of pushing the Establishment towards multilateralism. But now there is a third way, enshrined more or less in the policy recently adopted by the National Executive of the Labour Party and the official policy of the Liberal Party. Since this third way now exists, and since it in fact offers the best way of avoiding a world war, it is surely absurd not to take it merely because the unilateralists are nice people.

DAVID MARQUAND

Manchester

Castro's Cuba

I ADMIRED Ted Draper's article very much in your March ENCOUNTER. It is rare, although not so rare in Europe as it is here, to see a dispassionate and cogent analysis of that very emotional and irrational event which is the Cuban Revolution.

When I wrote Draper complimenting him on his article, I mainly disagreed with him on the deductions that one has to make from this emotionality and irrationality. He tried to make order out of the disorderly; he sought in a way to draw a blueprint from chaos; he tried to photograph a movement that has the dynamism of a space satellite. I argued that he had not allowed sufficient room for the fact that this revolution was made, above all, by Fidel Castro and also by his young associates, that Fidel is a young man who had no training or experience, who is very passionate, emotional and unpredictable. Moreover, the situation in Cuba had developed for profound reasons going back generations to a point where great and explosive forces were in existence. The fact that the Cuban middle class was relatively larger than elsewhere in Latin America—a point Ted Draper developed—could not obscure the fact that there was a great deal of misery, unemployment, and bitter resentment against the ruling classes and against the United States. The revolution was, therefore, a natural development that came out of Cuban history and the Cuban character, and it was Fidel Castro who gave it leadership and then set the pace, the tone, and the direction that the revolution was to take. I think Draper underestimated the importance of Fidel in the picture.

I do not, however, want to give you the impression that I disagreed in any fundamental way with Draper's analysis, which I think was very sound on the whole. I am pleased that he has been commissioned to make a longer and deeper study of this event. I have been fighting a somewhat lone battle here in the United States to try to prove that the Cuban Revolution has transformed the atmosphere in the Western Hemisphere and opened a new era in our history. I have from the beginning rated the revolution as one of the major events of our time and I have rated Fidel Castro as one of the important figures of our day.

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As I say, I have been somewhat alone in this but of recent months have found others by my side. This does not mean that I approve of what Fidel Castro and his government are doing or that I ignore the fact that he is the most formidable enemy of the United States who has ever appeared in our hemisphere. I am also profoundly disappointed that the dynamism of his revolution and the conflict with the United States should have induced him to place his revolution in the Communist hands. I do not mean that his revolution is Communist but it is on the side of Communism and it is now totalitarian.

HERBERT L. MATTHEWS

New York Times

Connolly

In the January issue of ENCOUNTER *I wrote a long, serious and sympathetic essay on Mr. Cyril Connolly's work as writer and critic. I had certain adverse criticisms to make, but the intention behind my essay was to present Mr. Connolly as a more interesting writer than he is generally taken to be. My starting point was that his work is frequently "dismissed with a patronising judgment, often by people who are obviously nothing like as sensitive, witty, and informed as he is."*

There must be many copies of that issue of ENCOUNTER *still lying about. So may I ask your readers to read my article and then try to recognise it in the description given by Mr. Philip Toynbee in his article "Search of the Self" (March 5)? "The kind of treatment he [Mr. Connolly] received not many weeks ago at the hands of Mr. John Wain—the bantering condescension, the almost archæological manner. Though grotesque, wearisome, and obsolete, wrote Mr. Wain, there is perhaps* something *to be said for the old boy as a symptom of his time."*

The word "wrote," there, may mislead the hasty reader, since it implies quotation. In fact I said not one of the things Mr. Toynbee credits me with. I challenge him to show where, in the text of my article, I called Mr. Connolly grotesque. Or wearisome. Or even (in his sense) obsolete. ("He may yet surprise us," was my last sentence.)

What is the use of writing criticism or anything else, if a silly travesty is to be offered, this confidently, a bare six weeks after publication?

JOHN WAIN

PHILIP TOYNBEE *writes: Mr. Wain is right, of course: I should have said "suggested," rather than "wrote." But other readers of his article have shared the impression I received from it. His opinion of Mr. Connolly is as good as mine, though not the same as mine.*

THE OBSERVER, *12 March*

AUTHORS

Brian Crozier, a member of *The Economist* staff, contributed an article on the French army and Algeria to our April 1960 issue. *The Rebels*, his study of post-war insurrections, was published by Chatto (and reviewed by C. M. Woodhouse in ENCOUNTER, Sept. 1960). . . . **Anatole Shub,** a former editor of *Commentary* and *The New Leader*, is now an assistant editor of the *New York Sunday Times*. . . . **Peter Heyworth** is music critic on *The Observer*. . . . **Robert Kee** one-time Literary Editor of the *Spectator*, is now a full-time writer, broadcaster, and television journalist. *Refugee World* will be published by Oxford University Press in the spring. . . . **John Wain** visited India at the invitation of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. His new book of poems, *Weep Before God*, is to be published by Macmillan in June. . . . **Harvey Einbinder** is a young New York physicist whose recent critiques of encyclopædias in the U.S. have aroused a storm of controversy. We hope to publish a reply by the editors of the Britannica in one of our next numbers. . . . A bi-lingual edition of **Aleksandr Yesenin-Volpin's** prose and poetry will be published shortly by Thames and Hudson in London and Frederick Praeger in New York.

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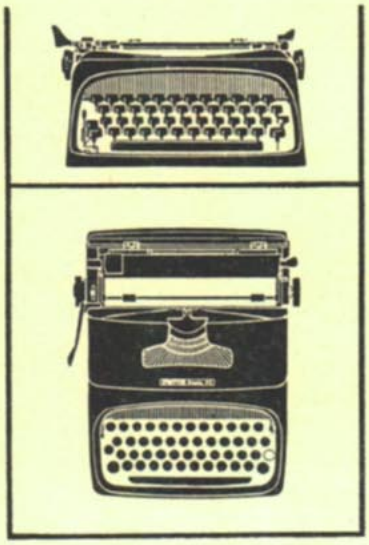

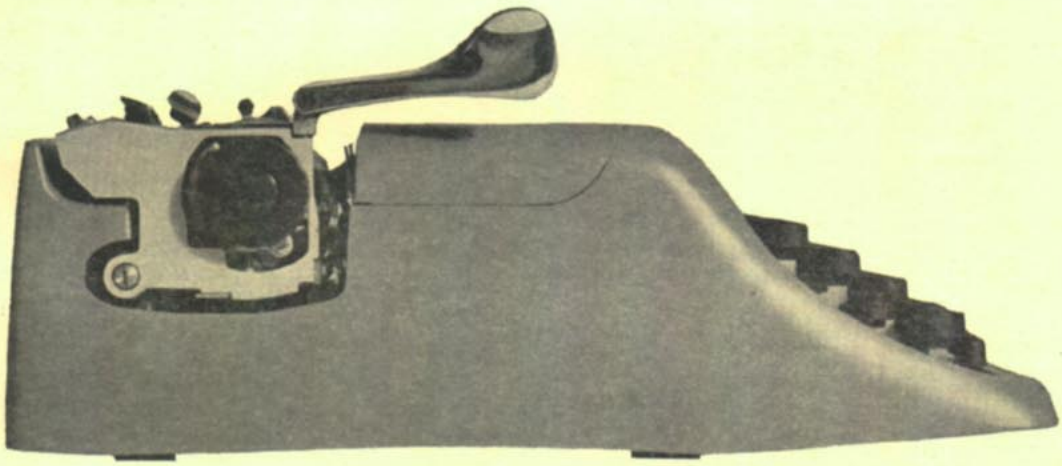

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